

A HISTORY OF IRISH MUSIC

BY

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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH Erin is symbolical of Minstrelsy there has never yet appeared anything like a trustworthy History of Music in Ireland—that is to say, of genuine Celtic-Irish and Anglo-Irish Music. We have absolutely no compact record of the “divine art,” wherein the Celts of Ireland pre-eminently excelled, or of its professors and exponents during sixteen hundred years of authentic history.

Innumerable magazine articles and references to the “land of song” have been published during the past century, but to the serious student of Irish music no standard work was at all available. True it is, no doubt, that the sources of information may almost be regarded as an *embarras des richesses*, yet these are so scattered, and in some cases so difficult of access, that the task of wading through such voluminous material would be no light one.

Hitherto the principal authorities on the subject have been Walker, Bunting, Hardiman, Petrie, Beauford, Drummond, Renahan, Pilkington, O’Curry, and Conran; whilst some little information is to be met with *passim* in Rimbault, Chappell, Burney, Hawkins, Crotch, Busby, Rockstro, Davey, Moore, Hudson, O’Daly, Joyce, Moffat, Sparling, Graves, and O’Donoghue. The Dic-

tionary of National Biography and *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* are somewhat deficient in their treatment of Irish musicians; and it is no exaggeration to add that the information vouchsafed of the thirty natives of Ireland who are included in the former colossal work of reference is unreliable, whilst the number of omissions is simply appalling.

O'Curry says: "Much has been confidently written on the ancient Irish music and musical instruments, particularly by Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker and Mr. Edward Bunting; the former chiefly from imagination, and the latter from induction, aided by a high musical education. Walker seems to have been the sport of every pretender to antiquarian knowledge, but more especially the dupe of an unscrupulous person of the name of Beauford—not the learned author of the *Memoir of a Map of Ireland*, but another clergyman of the name—who unblushingly pawned his pretended knowledge of facts on the well-intentioned but credulous Walker."

All Irish students must be for ever grateful to O'Curry for having gathered together what has well been described as "a mine of information" in his *Lectures on the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, edited by Dr. W. K. Sullivan. The section dealing with "Music and Musical Instruments in Ancient Erin" cannot be ignored, especially in connection with Dr. Sullivan's learned Introduction and Notes; yet, I must rather unwillingly acknowledge that many of his theories and conclusions are at variance with the result of recent scholarship. During the past thirty years our knowledge of matters relating to Ireland has been wonderfully added to; and the investigations of erudite writers have cleared away the almost impenetrable haze which had so long obscured the state of civilization as regards

literature, art, and music in pre-Norman and mediaeval days.

No further apology is therefore needed for offering the present work to the reading public. Twenty-six years of unwearied research have resulted in a colossal amount of material, but I have endeavoured to condense my matter so as to produce a concise history. Moreover, I have avoided as far as possible all technicalities, and thus hope to make these pages more popular, and within the scope of the average reader.

It would be ungrateful not to mention the valuable assistance received from numerous kind friends, and from the Librarians of the home and continental libraries. As far as possible, all references have been verified at first hand; whilst, from the sixteenth century onwards, the State Papers and contemporary documents have been laid under tribute. Files of newspapers, commencing with the year 1728, have proved of much service, and rare magazines and chap books have been consulted. Dr. Henry Watson and Dr. Culwick lent me some unique music books, and Mr. T. L. Southgate allowed me to use his exceedingly scarce edition of Playford's *Dancing Master* (1652). The Lord Abbot of Mount Melleray, Mr. F. J. Bigger, Mr. Andrew Gibson, Mr. Barclay Squire, Mr. David Comyn, Dr. Douglas Hyde, Mr. H. F. Berry, Dr. W. H. Cummings, Dr. Cox, The O'Neill, The Lady Abbess of Stanbrook, Mr. Dix, Father G. O'Neill, S.J., and others helped me in many ways.

I must especially thank Father Maurus, Prior of Mount Melleray, for his kindness in reading through the proofs, and supplying many valuable suggestions. His unrivalled knowledge of Irish was ever at my service in the case of archaic Irish names of songs,

dance-tunes, etc., some of which proved a stumbling-block to O'Curry and Hardiman.

Above all, I must thank my subscribers for their material support in the expense of publication.

In conclusion, it is my earnest wish that the result of my labours will prove, in the words of O'Heerin, "an addition of knowledge on holy Ireland."

WM. H. GRATTAN FLOOD.

ENNISCORTHY,

November 1st, 1904.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I GLADLY take the opportunity of a second edition to make numerous corrigenda, and also to utilise some musical data (furnished by Dr. Watson, Mr. W. J. Lawrence, and other kind friends) which only came to hand since the publication of the work. The almost universal chorus of approval from home and foreign journals, and the numerous congratulatory letters received from competent critics, fully justify the appearance of a long looked-for volume. It is satisfactory to learn that the first edition was exhausted within three months, and this is all the more remarkable, as I had been warned that books relating to Ireland do not sell. Apart from the wider circulation which a second edition will ensure, I feel flattered that my labours in the cause of Irish music have elicited such friendly recognition on all sides.

W. H. G. F.

February, 1906.

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HISTORY OF IRISH MUSIC.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT IRISH MUSIC.

MUSIC is a universal language, appealing to the very soul of man, and is the outpouring of the heart, whether to express joy or sorrow, to rouse to battle or soothe to sleep, to give expression of jubilation for the living or of wailing for the dead, to manifest sympathy with society or devotion to the Deity. It is, as Thomas Davis writes, "the first faculty of the Irish." He goes on as follows :—

"No enemy speaks slightly of Irish Music, and no friend need fear to boast of it. It is without a rival. Its antique war-tunes, such as those of O'Byrne, O'Donnell, MacAlistrum and Brian Boru, stream and crash upon the ear like the warriors of a hundred glens meeting; and you are borne with them to battle, and they and you charge and struggle amid cries and battle-axes and stinging arrows. Did ever a wail make man's marrow quiver and fill his nostrils with the breath of the grave, like the *ululu* of the North or the *wirrasthrue* [ᄠ ᄢᄢᄢᄢ ᄢᄢ ᄢᄢᄢᄢ] of Munster?"

In ancient Ireland the systems of law, medicine, poetry, and music, according to Keating, "were set to music, being poetical compositions." Vallancey tells us that the bards, specially selected from amongst noble youths of conspicuous stature and beauty, "had a dis-

tinctive dress of five colours, and wore a white mantle and a blue cap ornamented with a gold crescent." The curriculum for an *ollamh* (bard) extended to twelve years and more, at the expiration of which he was given the doctor's cap, that is, the *barréd*, and the title of *ollamh*.

Keating assures us that Cormac Mac Art, *Ard Righ* [Head King] of Ireland (A.D. 254-277), had in his court ten persons in constant attendance:—1, A Prince for companion; 2, a Brehon; 3, a Druid; 4, a Chief Physician; 5, an *Ollamh*; 6, an *Ard File* [head poet]; 7, an *Ollamh re ceoil* "with a band of music [*oirfideadh*] to soften his pillow and solace him in times of relaxation;" 8, three stewards of the household. The *ollamh*, or *ollav*, be it understood, was the Chief Bard, whilst the *oirfideacha* were the instrumental musicians. Cormac himself was styled "Ceolach," or the Musical.

Dr. Douglas Hyde, in his monumental *Literary History of Ireland*, gives by far the clearest and most succinct account of the bardic classifications. The real poet was the *file* (of which profession there were seven grades), to whom the bard was the merest second fiddle. The Bards were divided into the *Saor* or patrician class, and *Daor* or plebeians—with eight grades in each class. They were poets, not musicians—a fact which has not unfrequently been overlooked by writers on this subject.

It is now absolutely certain that the Irish were a literary people long before the coming of St. Patrick and we have Ogham stones yet preserved which date from the third century. The codices of St. Gall and Bobbio—valuable as they are—must yield supremacy to the oghams, which undoubtedly furnish us with speci-

mens of Gaelic grammar earlier than any known writings. The Irish alphabetic inscriptions in ogham which have survived the hurly-burly of seventeen centuries are mostly on stone, though they were also written on rings, wooden tablets, ivory, bone, gold, silver, lead, crystals, twigs, etc. So far, that is up to the present year (1904), about 340 oghams have been discovered; and whilst some of them are decidedly Christian, the greater number are pagan. Moreover, the deciphering of these quasi-cryptic oghams has been a veritable triumph for the authenticity of ancient Irish history and tradition.

Sixty years ago the savants sneeringly asserted that our ogham inscriptions were "mere tricks of the middle ages, and founded on the Roman alphabet." Now, however, owing to the researches of Brash, Ferguson, Graves, Rhys, Barry, Power, Macalister and others, the reading of the mystic strokes is almost an exact science. The very word *ogham* suggests at once a musical signification, and, therefore, it is of the very highest importance to claim for Ireland the earliest form of musical tablature.

In MacFirbis's MS. Book of Genealogies, there is mention of the three great Tuatha de Danann musicians, viz., *Music*, *Sweet*, and *Sweet-String*, i.e., CEOL, BIND, and TETBIND, whilst the chief harper was named Uathne, or Harmony. Our most ancient writers agree that the Milesians, in their first expedition to Ireland, were accompanied by a harper. The *Dinn Seanchus*, compiled by Amergin MacAmalgaid (MacAwley), circ. A.D. 544, relates that "in the time of Geide, monarch of Ireland, A.M. 3143, the people deemed each other's voices

sweeter than the warblings of a melodious harp ; such peace and concord reigned among them that no music could delight them more than the sound of each other's voice." In the same ancient tract there is mention made of music, in the *Vision of Cahir Mor*, King of Ireland. However, passing over the ages that may be regarded as quasi-fabulous, we come to the close of the third century, when we are on fairly solid historical ground. At this early period the number of Irish minstrels was very great ; and there is a record of *nine* different musical instruments in use.

Heccataeus, the great geographer quoted by Diodorus, is the first who mentions the name *Celt*, and he describes the Celts of Ireland, five hundred years before Christ, as singing songs in praise of Apollo, and playing melodiously on the harp. The Galatians, who spoke Celtic in the time of St. Jerome, sang sweetly.

There is scarcely any room for doubt that the pre-Christian inhabitants of Ireland had the use of letters, the ogham scale, and the ogham music tablature. The Bressay inscription furnishes an early example of music scoring ; and it is quite apparent that the inscriber regarded the ogham and the quaint tablature employed as one and the same—in fact, three of the mystic strokes are identical with three musical signs.*

Inasmuch, therefore, as there are genuine ogham inscriptions dating from the third century, we are forced to believe that the music tablature also co-existed at the same early period. Not a little remarkable is it that the very name of ogham writing, namely, *Bethluisnin*, or Birch Alder tree, is derivable from a tree or branch ;

* See "Ogham Readings," *Journal R.S.A.*, 1857, p. 328.

and the Irish letters—sixteen in number—are perfectly unique of their kind. Moreover, the trees were called after the letters, and not, as some have alleged, the letters after the trees.

The music pupils in pre-Christian Irish schools had their *music staves* ; and O'Curry describes for us the *Headless Staves* of the Poets, *i.e.*, *squared staves*, used for walking (or purposes of defence), when closed, and for writing on, when open, in the shape of fans. And, regarding the advanced state of our ancient bardic poetry, Constantine Nigra writes :—"The first certain examples of rhyme are found on Celtic soil and amongst Celtic nations, in songs made by poets, who are either of Celtic origin themselves or had long resided among the Celtic races. . . . Final assonance, or rhyme, can have been derived solely from the laws of Celtic philology."

Archbishop Healy tells us that St. Patrick "taught the sons of the bards how to chant the Psalms of David, and sing together the sweet music of the Church's hymns." He adds : "They might keep their harps and sing the songs of Erin's heroic youth, as in the days of old. But the great saint taught them how to tune their harps to loftier strains than those of the banquet hall or the battle-march."*

Apropos of the Psalms of David, Biblical commentators agree that the music of the Apostolic age was derived

* As regards the absurd theory that St. Patrick introduced letters into Ireland, it is only necessary to quote Colgan, the venerable hagiologist, who tells us that Dubhthach MacLugair, Arch-Poet of Ireland, had taught St. Fiacc of Sletty, and "had sent him a little before into Connaught to present some of his poems to the princes of that country." St. Patrick may possibly have introduced the *Roman* letters, but it must be borne in mind that the pre-Patrician Irish had their *Irish* alphabet centuries previously.

from the Jewish psalmody. The Apostles themselves "adapted" the psalm tunes of the Temple, but, as the Hebrews had no musical notation, the Synagogal chants and melodies, which must have been simple, were handed down traditionally. Very little is actually known of even the shape of the Jewish instruments, as not a single *bas relief* exists by which we can accurately judge. However, in regard to the vocal department, we can assume that a *monotonous recitative* gradually developed into occasional modulations, and, in process of time, worked up to an ambitious form of *roulade*. An irregular form of chant, designated *cantillation*, was the primitive system of psalm-singing; and it is worthy of note that the modern Arabs recite the Koran in this manner.

Many elaborate essays have been written on Hebrew accents, but, unfortunately, it seems that these accents expressed both the *interval*, or movement of the voice, and also the *melodic succession* of notes, with an array of embellishment. Moreover, as Sir John Stainer says, "some of the vowel accents of Hebrew became tonal accents if placed in a particular place with regard to the letters forming the words," which, of course, increases our difficulty in attempting any translation. As is well known, the Hebrews utilized poetry and music as a sort of medium for religious worship, whereas the Greeks cultivated music and the kindred arts solely for art's sake—and thereby evolved an ideal mythological world.

Most musicians are now agreed that the early Christian musical system was not altogether founded on the Greek *modes*, as, apart from other arguments, the ecclesiastical modes could in no wise be accommodated to

Pythagorean tonality. Moreover, for over three hundred years, the early Christians, that is, the Christians of the Catacombs, could not possibly have any ornate form of service; and the music of that period must needs have been of a primitive nature.

Dr. W. H. Cummings, one of the most eminent living English musicians, thus writes: "I believe the Irish had the diatonic scale as we have it to-day. It was the advent of the Church scales which supplanted that beautiful scale." More recently, Father Bewerunge, Professor of Ecclesiastical Chant in Maynooth College, expresses his conviction as follows:—

"It is thought that the old Irish melodies contain within them the germ that may be developed into a fresh luxuriant growth of Irish music. Now, *the Irish melodies belong to a stage of musical development very much anterior to that of Gregorian chant. Being based fundamentally on a pentatonic scale, they reach back to a period altogether previous to the dawn of musical history.*"*

On Easter Sunday, 433, Duththach (Duffy) MacLugair, chief bard of Ireland, gave his adhesion to the tenets of Christianity, as propounded by St. Patrick; and soon after, the Irish minstrels, almost to a man, imitated his noble example. However, so far from the ecclesiastical chant introduced by St. Patrick in aught affecting the music of ancient Erin, it was exactly *vice versa*. O'Curry, Dr. Sullivan, Archbishop Healy, and others are in error when they assert that Gregorian chant coloured much of the music in Ireland from the fifth to the eighth century. As a matter of fact, "Gregorian" music only dates from the year 593; and it was the

* *New Ireland Review*, March, 1900.

Gallic (some say *Ambrosian*) chant which St. Patrick taught.* Even assuming that the *plain song* of St. Gregory reached Ireland about the year 620, which is improbable, Irish psalmody and hymnody were distinctly *Celtic* in the first half of the seventh century, and were mainly "adaptations" of the old Irish pre-Christian melodies.

*The learned Usher informs us that "St. Jerome affirmed that Mark the Evangelist *chanted as the Scots do*," etc.

CHAPTER II.

IRISH MUSIC FROM THE 6TH TO THE 9TH CENTURY.

THE *Carmen Paschale* of our Irish Sedulius (Shiel), written in the fifth century, was, according to Dr. Sigerson, "the first great Christian epic worthy of the name," the Latin metre of which is decidedly Irish in its characteristics. But, from a musical point of view, the beautiful *Introit* of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin—"Salve Sancta Parens enixa puerpera Regem," which is still sung throughout the Western Church, is the most glowing tribute to the estimation in which this worthy Irishman's compositions were held by the compilers of the Roman Missal and Gradual. Again, in the Roman Liturgy we find our Irish composer's abecedarian hymn commencing "A Solis ortus cardine"; and, as Dr. Healy writes, "several other expressions in the Divine Office are borrowed from the *Carmen Paschale* of Sedulius."

Some critics have, as might be supposed, questioned the *nationality* of Sedulius (for there is no contrary opinion as to the *authenticity* of his writings), but this point is set at rest by another Irish scholar of European fame, Dicuil the Geographer. This Dicuil, who flourished about the year 795, wrote a celebrated treatise *De Mensura Orbis Terrarum*, and, in the second section of his fifth chapter, he quotes twelve poetical lines from Theodosius, regarding which he observes that the faulty prosody had the authority of Virgil, "*whom in similar cases our own Sedulius imitated.*" Needless to add that the mention of "*noster Sedulius*" by Dicuil, fellow-

countryman of the Christian Virgin, should be held as conclusive.

In 544, Amergin MacAmalgaid mentions the Irish Harp; and, at one *Feis* there were over a thousand bards present—each *ollamh* having thirty bards in his train. It is interesting to notice that the last *Feis* at Tara was held by Dermot MacFergus, in 560. As a result of the Synod of Drumceat, near Limavady, in 590, the chief minstrels were prohibited from pursuing the nomadic life they had previously been leading, and were assigned apartments in the mansion houses of the princes and chiefs.* The *Annals of Ulster* chronicle the death of Ailill the Harper, son of Aedh Slaine, who was killed in the year 634.

Another early reference to the Irish Harp is in a distich on the death of St. Columba (d. 596), wherein we read of a "song of the *Cruit* without a *ceis*," that is, "a harp-melody without a harp-fastener [*ceis*]," or an air played on an untuned harp. Regarding our Irish *cruit* Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, Bart., Mus.Doc., says:—"From its very construction we must assume that Harmony was known to the ancient Irish." Moreover, the Irish Harmony was distinctly in advance of Hucbald's (840-930), which only allowed fourths, and fifths, and octaves, with occasional elevenths and twelfths, whereas the Celts admitted major and minor thirds as consonant intervals.

Not only were our ancestors acquainted with Harmony in the sixth century, but they had an acquaintance with discant or primitive counterpoint. From a

*At this Synod, according to Dallan Forgaill, were: "Twenty Bishops, two score priests, fifty deacons, and thirty students;" and he adds that the Bishops and priests were "of excellence and worth," and were famed for "singing psalms—a commendable practice."

passage in Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba* we gather that the Irish monks sang canticles in counterpoint. St. Adamnan uses the phrase "*modulabiliter decantare*," which clearly indicates discant; and, in the ancient Irish glosses of the eighth century "*modulantibus*" is glossed by *donaibhi bindigeddar*, that is, "to those who make melody." Hucbald, in the ninth century, describes organising as "*modulatio*." Furthermore, John Scotus Erigena, the world-famed Irish philosopher, who died circ. 875, is the first authority to allude to discant or organum, which subsequently developed into counterpoint. This he does in his tract *De Divisione Naturæ* (864), as will be seen in Chapter VII.

In connection with the subject of ecclesiastical chant it is as well to emphasise the fact that whilst the Irish at the close of the sixth century had a form of music tablature, a knowledge of the diatonic scale, harmony, counterpoint, and musical form, the plain-song of Rome was in a very elementary stage, and was only known traditionally until collected and arranged in an *Antiphonarium* by Pope St. Gregory the Great, in 593. Dr. Haberl adds:—"Whether Pope Gregory made use of the letters of the alphabet or of symbols (points, accents, etc.) to designate the sounds is uncertain; but it is certain that whatever signs he adopted they were not adequate to determine the intervals with exactness." In fact, not a single authentic liturgical chant-book in existence goes back farther than the eighth century, or early in the ninth, as some assert.*

*From the *Book of Lecan* it would appear that St. Gregory the Great was of Irish origin, his descent being traced from Cairbri Musc, son of Conaire II., Ard Righ (Head King) of Ireland, A.D. 212—220.

All musical persons have read of the world-renowned monastery of St. Gall, in Switzerland, but the fact is too often ignored that its foundation, in the year 612, was the work of the Irish saint Cellach, whose name has been latinized *Gallus* or Gall. This great Irishman, a student of Bangor, Co. Down, the friend and disciple of St. Columbanus, died October 16th, 645, aged 96, and, at his demise, the fame of his music-school became known far and near.

About the year 653, St. Gertrude, of Brabant (daughter of Pepin, Mayor of the Palace), abbess of Nivelles, in Brabant, sent for St. Foillan and St. Ultan, brothers of our celebrated St. Fursey (Patron of Perrone), to teach *psalmody to her nuns*. These two Irish monks complied with her request, and built an adjoining monastery at Fosse, in the diocese of Liege.

St. Mailduff, the Irish founder of Mailduffsburgh, or Malmesbury, in England, flourished in 670, and composed many beautiful hymns. He is best known as the tutor of St. Aldhelm, who tells us that the English students of his time flocked daily in great numbers to the schools of Ireland "of unspeakable excellence," and that Erin, "synonymous with learning, literally blazed like the stars of the firmament with the glory of her scholars."

Davey, in his *History of English Music*, mentions, with pardonable pride, the fact that St. Aldhelm (d. 709) is the first English writer who alludes to *neums*, or musical notation signs, but he conveniently ignores the equally well-known fact that the illustrious Saxon saint owed his knowledge of neumatic music tablature and liturgical chant to our countryman, St. Mailduff.

In regard to the so-called Gregorian *Sacramentarium* which Pope Adrian sent to the Emperor Charlemagne by John, Abbot of Ravenna, between the years 788 and 790, Dr. Haberl, one of the greatest living authorities on Church Music, says that "it was altered in the copying, and Gallican elements were introduced." Moreover, it contained only the Roman Station-festivals, *with additions made by Popes that came after Gregory*," so that Duchesne justly observes that "it should rather be called the *Sacramentarium Hadrianum*." The Pope also sent two famous Roman singers, Peter and Romanus (author of the Romanian notation) to the Irish monastery at St. Gall's, who brought with them a faithful copy of the Gregorian *Antiphonarium*, but Duchesne considers that this great musical work was also altered by the monks of St. Gall. In any case, owing to the very imperfect method of notation by *neums* (which really were only aids to memory, or a form of mnemonics to indicate the rendition of the liturgical chant as taught orally), it is only within the past twenty years that a scientific attempt to solve the puzzles of neum-accent has been made by the learned Benedictine monks of Solesmes. Certain it is, however, that the Celtic monks, from the time of Sedulius, unquestionably introduced and composed many original melodies for the early plain-chant books, and these musical arrangements were afterwards retained in the service of the Church. As a matter of fact, the name *Cantus Gregorianus*, or Gregorian Chant, is first mentioned in the ninth century, by Pope St. Leo (847-855), in a letter to the Abbot Honoratus, e.g., *dulcedinem Gregoriani carminis*.

Dungal, an Irish monk, who founded a great school

at Pavia, was a particular friend of the Emperor Charlemagne, and at his death, at Bobbio, in 834, he bequeathed to that Irish monastery his library, including *three fine Antiphonaries*, which are now in the Ambrosian Library of Milan.

In reference to St. Gall's, Ekkhard, the historian of the monastery of St. Gall's, who wrote in the earlier part of the eleventh century (1036), says:—"Moengal came from Rome to the Abbey of St. Gall in company with his uncle Mark, to visit their countryman Grimoald, who was elected Abbot of that monastery about the year 840." This testimony of a distinguished German historian is convincing as to the nationality of Grimoald, Abbot of St. Gall's, and also of Mark and Moengal. Were it not for such an authority, some persons would be very sceptical as to the fact of any Irishman rejoicing in the seemingly German name of Grimoald. It is as well to explain—even to the Irish reader—that many of our countrymen who went abroad were "re-christened," inasmuch as the Irish Christian names—to say nothing of surnames—were not sufficiently intelligible or euphonious for Continental taste. Therefore, do we find *Moengal* figuring as Marcellus, just as *Maelmuire* appears as Marianus and Mylerus; *Maelmaedhog* as Malachy; *Gillaisu* and *Cellach* as Gelasius; *Gilla in Coimded* as Germanus; *Tuathal* as Tutilo; *Donal* as Donatus; *Aedh* as Aidan and Hugh, etc.

In the year 870, the above-mentioned Moengal (Marcellus) was appointed head master of the Music School of St. Gall's, under whose rule it became "the wonder and delight of Europe." "The copying of music became such a feature of the work done at St. Gall's that

the scribes of this monastery," as Matthew writes in his *History of Music*, "provided all Germany with MS. books of Gregorian Chant, all beautifully illuminated." Moengal died September 30th, 890, and had as his successor his favourite Irish disciple Tuathal, whose name is Latinized Tutilo.

Tuathal, or Tutilo, was even more famous than his master Moengal, and was not only a wonderful musician, but was also famed as a poet, orator, painter, goldsmith, builder, and sculptor. We are told that he was a skilled performer on the *Cruit* and the *Psallery*. Père Schubiger published many of the *Tropes* composed by Tutilo, two of which, "Hodie cantandus," and "Omnipotens Genitor," betray all the well-known characteristics of Irish music. This marvellous Irish monk died at an advanced age, on the 27th of April, 915.

Although music was the great feature of St. Gall's, literature was by no means neglected—in fact, to the Irish scribes of St. Gall's we owe the preservation of priceless manuscripts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. It was mainly from the glosses of the Irish MSS. at St. Gall's, dating from 650-900, that Zeuss deduced the rules which formed the basis of his *Grammatica Celtica*, in 1853. *Inter alia*, these glosses incontestably proved that part-singing was known to the Irish of the seventh century. Dr. Sigerson in his *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, gives us a charming translation of "The Blackbird's Song," written in Irish by an Irish monk of St. Gall's about the year 855, and published by Nigra in 1872.

O'Curry says that we have Irish lyrics of the ninth

century which will sing to some of our old tunes; and, he quotes a boat-song by Cormac MacCullenan, Prince-Bishop of Cashel, who died in 908, which would seem to have been written for the melody of "For Ireland I would not tell her name"—"Δρ Ἐῖρην 'νὶ νεόρδωνν cé hí." Let me add that the first Ode of Horace sings admirably to the Irish melody "Ἐσίμπε ἀμ ἐοῦδα ῥ' ἡ οὐρίῳς me," as pointed out by a writer in the *London Sun*, of October 18th, 1844.

The *Liber Ymnorum Notkeri*, one of the most ancient MSS. belonging to St. Gall's, is fully "noted," and was illuminated by an Irish scribe. Dr. W. K. Sullivan says that "the initial letter of the Easter Sequence, commencing 'Laudes Salvatori voce modulemur supplici,' is an excellent example of the interlaced Irish style of ornament, with the interesting peculiarity that the trefoil or shamrock is used as a prominent feature of it."

St. Notker Balbulus, the author of this valuable book of hymns, about the year 870, shed undying lustre on the music school of St. Gall's, but he is best known to students of liturgy as the inventor of *Sequences*. This honour must be shared by Moengal, who gave Notker the first pattern *Alleluia*, and revised his pupil's work. Although the original meaning of Sequence was a prolongation of the last syllable of *Alleluia* by a series of neumes, jubili, or wordless chant, yet the name was more generally given to a melody following the *Epistle*, before the Gospel. We need only refer to an ancient Irish authority quoted in the *Book of Lismore* for an explanation of the term *Sequence*; and it is added that "Notker, Abbot of St. Gall's, made [invented]

sequences, and Alleluia after them in the form in which they are." In process of time a special Sequence was introduced for every Sunday and feast-day, but Pope Pius V. eliminated all but five.

Among the numerous Sequences composed by St. Notker is the famous one on the Bridge, the "*Antiphona de morte*," commencing *Media vita in morte sumus*—"In the midst of life we are in death"—which was almost immediately adopted throughout Europe as a funeral anthem. Not unfrequently are the words "In the midst of life we are in death," quoted as Scriptural, but the text is only one of the many contributions to the Sacred Liturgy due to Irish writers and composers.

RESPONSORIUM: MEDIA VITA.

[Composed by Blessed Notker Balbulus, 870. Modernised from the St. Gall copy by Wm. H. Grattan Flood.]

Me - di - a vi - ta in mor - te su -

mus, quem quaeri - mus, ad - ju

torem ni - si te Do - mi -

ne? qui pro pec-ca-tis no - stris ju -

ste i - ra - sce - - - ris.

Fine.

Sancte Deus

Sancte for-tis Sancte

mi-ser-i-cors Salva-tor a-

maræ morti ne tra-das - nos.

V. In-te-spe-ra-ve- - - - runt pa-

tres no - stri: spe - ra - ve - runt et

li - be - ra - - sti e - os.

Sancte Deus, etc.

al fins.

NOTE.—This exquisite *Responsorium*, also called *Antiphona de Morte*, from the fact of having been the favourite "anthem" sung at all "offices for the dead" during the Middle Ages, was suggested to Blessed Notker *balbulus* (the stammerer) by his Irish master, Moengal, or Marcellus, about the year 870. Not only was it superstitiously supposed to be a preservative against death, but the singing of it was believed by many to cause death; and hence, the Council of Cologne, in the twelfth century, forbade the chanting of "*Media Vita*" without the express permission of the Ordinary of the diocese. The neum-accent merely served as a mnemonic guide for the pre-centor or choirmaster, showing the number of notes to be sung and the manner of grouping them, but leaving the interpretation as to exact intervals and phrasing to the Cantor, who was required to know all the liturgical chants "in theca cordis." St. Notker also

But why dwell longer on St. Gall's. All Europe must acknowledge its indebtedness to Ireland more or less. The learned Kessel, writing of our Irish monks, says:—

"Every province in Germany proclaims this race as its benefactor. Austria celebrates St. Colman, St. Virgilius, St. Modestus, and others. To whom but to the ancient Scots [Irish] was due the famous 'Schottenkloster' of Vienna? Salsburg, Ratisbon, and all Bavaria honour St. Virgilius as their apostle. . . . Burgundy, Alsace, Helvetia, Suevia, with one voice proclaim the glory of Columbanus, Gall, Fridolin, Arbogast, Florentius, Trudpert, who first preached the true religion amongst them. Who were the founders of the monasteries of St. Thomas at Strasburg, and of St. Nicholas at Memmingen, but these same Scots? . . . The Saxons and the tribes of Northern Germany are indebted to them to an extent which may be judged by the fact that the first ten Bishops who occupied the See of Verden belonged to that race."

I have now reached the limit of the present section, namely, the close of the ninth century. The reader has seen that the ancient Irish were acquainted with the ogham music tablature in pre-Christian ages; they had their battle-marches, dance tunes, folk songs, chants, and hymns in the fifth century; they were the earliest to adopt the *neums* or neumatic notation, for the plain chant of the Western Church; they modified, and introduced Irish melodies into, the Gregorian Chant; they had an intimate acquaintance with the diatonic scale long before it was perfected by Guido of Arezzo; they

elucidated the "Romanian" signs as taught by Romanus, in 795, as we learn from a letter of his, in a manuscript of the thirteenth century, preserved at St. Thomas's, Leipzig. The earliest known theoretical treatise on church music was by a priest, Aurelian of Réomé, in his *Musica Disciplina* (850), who described the system as devised for the Western Church by Pope St. Agatho (678-682). St. Notker died a centenarian on April 6th, 912.

were the first to employ harmony and counterpoint; they had quite an army of bards and poets; they employed blank verse, elegaic rhymes, consonant, assonant, inverse, burthen, dissyllabic, trisyllabic, and quadrisyllabic rhymes, not to say anything of *caoinés*, laments, elegies, metrical romances, etc.; they invented the musical arrangement which developed into the sonata form; they had a world-famed school of harpers, and, finally, they generously diffused musical knowledge all over Europe.

CHAPTER III.

ANCIENT IRISH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

THE subject of ancient Irish musical instruments is involved in much obscurity, which has been intensified by the absurd theories of archæologists about a century ago. Walker, whose book on the Irish bards was published in 1786, was, unfortunately, misled by Beauford and others; and no writer tackled the question properly till O'Curry's *Lectures* made Irishmen feel that a knowledge of the Gaelic language was absolutely essential for the elucidation of this and kindred knotty points.

Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica* (1853) was the first book to give a real clue to the nature of many old Irish instruments; and the musical references were taken from the glosses written by the Irish monks of St. Gall's, which commentaries make the basis of this epoch-making work. These glosses, as mentioned in the first chapter, date from 650 to 900, and are without any doubt the earliest MSS. we possess which throw light on various musical allusions. However, it remained for O'Curry to present the clearest and most succinct account of references to music, scattered as they had previously been in a very fragmentary way throughout the hundreds of ancient Irish manuscripts critically examined by that much-lamented Gaelic scholar.

To the reader who wishes for an exhaustive account of ancient Irish musical instruments, I can unhesitatingly recommend O'Curry's admirable *Lectures*,

though I do not acquiesce in some of his opinions. Were that eminent Celticist now alive, he himself would have altered not a few of the conclusions arrived at; but, all the same, his list of the instruments played on in pre-Norman days, as recorded in the oldest Irish MSS., is very interesting. Recent Celtic scholarship, especially by German, French, and Irish writers, has been freely availed of in collating the various passages quoted by O'Curry, and I have summarised his list, with some necessary modifications, as follows:—

1. *Cruit* and *Clairseach* [harp]; 2. *Psalterium*, *Nabla*, *Timpan*, *Kinnor*, *Trigonon*, and *Ocht-tedach* [stringed instruments]; 3. *Buinne* [oboe or flute]; 4. *Bennbuabhal* and *Corn* [horns]; 5. *Cuislenna* [bag-pipes]; 6. *Feadan* [flute or fife]; 7. *Guthbuinne* [horn]; 8. *Stoc* and *Sturgan* [trumpets]; 9. *Pipai* [pipes]; 10. *Craebh ciuil* and *Crann ciuil* [musical branch or cymbalum]; 11. *Cnamha* [castanets]; 12. *Fidil*.

Omitting the 10th and 11th, which, after all, were not musical instruments in the restricted sense, we thus find nine instruments in general use among the ancient Irish. The professional names of the various performers were:—

1. *Cruitire* [harper]; 2. *Timpanach* [timpanist]; 3. *Buinnire* [flute player]; 4. *Cornaire* [horn player]; 5. *Cuisleannach* [player on the bag-pipes]; 6. *Fedanach* [fife player]; 7. *Graice* [horn player]; 8. *Stocaire* and *Sturganaidhe* [trumpeter]; 9. *Pipaire* [piper].

The *CRUIT* is called *crwth* by the Welsh, and *crowde* by the English. Originally a small harp or lyre, plucked with the fingers (as in the case of the Roman *fidicula*), it was subsequently played with a bow, and is mentioned

by an Irish poet who flourished about four hundred years before Christ. It is justly regarded as the progenitor of the *Crotta*, the German *Rotte*, and the Italian *Rota*. St. Venantius Fortunatus (the great Christian poet, A.D. 530-609) calls the *Cruit* a *CROTTA*; and we learn from Gerbert that it was an oblong-shaped instrument, with a neck and finger-board, having six strings, of which four were placed on the fingerboard and two outside it—the two *open* strings representing treble *G*, with its lower octave. In fact, it was a small harp, and was generally played resting on the knee, or sometimes placed on a table before the performer, after the manner of the zither.

The *CLAIRSEACH* was the large harp, “the festive or heroic harp of the chiefs and ladies, as also of the bards,” having from 29 to 58 strings, and even 60, but as a rule 30 strings. Its normal compass was from *CC* (the lowest string on the violoncello) to *D*, in all 30 notes, that is, about four octaves. It was generally tuned in the scale of *G*, but, by alteration of one string a semitone (effected by means of the *ceis* or harp fastener), the key might be changed to *C* or *D*. “In those keys the diatonic scale was perfect and complete, similar to ours now in use.” It may also be added that the ancient Irish played the treble with the left hand, and the bass with the right.

Among early representations of the Irish harp we find one in a MS. of St. Blaise, quoted by Gerbert, dating from the close of the ninth century. Another one is on the panel of a sculptured cross at Ullard, Co. Kilkenny, dating from the tenth century, and which, as Dr. Petrie points out, is “the first specimen of the harp without

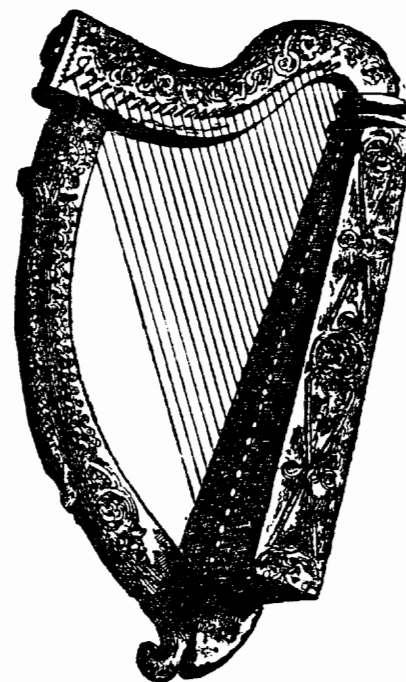
a fore-pillar that has hitherto been found outside of Egypt."* There is a good representation of an 8-stringed harp on the metal shrine of St. Maedhoc, dating from the 9th century. Cambrensis alludes to the harp of St. Kevin (*d.* June 3, 618) as held in great reverence by the natives, and to this day considered a valuable relic. An 11th-century harp is drawn on the cover of an Irish manuscript in the Stowe Library, and another drawing of a harp of 23 strings is found on a relic case (dating 1350) containing the *Fiacail Phadraic* (tooth of St. Patrick), formerly belonging to Sir Valentine Blake. This shrine case was ornamented by Thomas, 8th Baron of Athenry.

The so-called "Brian Boru's Harp," though not dating from the time when the hero of Clontarf flourished, has a venerable antiquity, and was almost certainly a harp of the O'Briens. It really dates from about the year 1220, having been made for the famous Donnchadh Cairbre O'Brien, King of Thomond, whose death is recorded on the 8th March, 1242-43. A detailed account of its workmanship is given by Petrie and other writers; and it is here sufficient to mention that it is furnished with 30 metallic strings, having a compass from *C* below the bass stave to *D* above the treble stave.

One of the most veracious of Irish chroniclers, Tighernach, who died in 1088, has preserved for us a poem, dating from 620, wherein the Irish harp is extolled. Walker says that "the *cionnar cruit*, or *Kinnor*, had ten strings, and was played on with a bow or

* There are still preserved Egyptian harps dating from B.C. 2000, but it was during the rule of Rameses II., *cir.* B.C. 1284, that the harp, from being triangular shaped, assumed its present form. The Egyptians had various other instruments, such as the lyre, single and double flutes, trumpets, timbrels, sistras, etc. Harps are sculptured on the High Crosses of Monasterboice and Castledermot—not later than the 10th century.

plectrum." He describes it as "similar to the *canora cythara* of the Latins of the Middle Ages, and the origin of the modern guitar." Another form of *cruit* was the *reamthine cruit*, which the same author tells us was "the *cruith* of the Welsh," and is said to be the parent of



BRIAN BORU'S HARP.

the violin, "but having only six strings." We also have a record of the *Fiddle* being used in Ireland as early as the seventh century, as is quoted by O'Curry from the poem on the Fair of Carman. In regard to the very favourite and oft-quoted instrument known as a *timpan*, it has been variously explained as a drum, or a

sort of tambourine, whilst an Anglo-Saxon MS. makes it equivalent to a bagpipe! Dr. W. K. Sullivan cautiously tells us (relying on the authority of Dr. Charles O'Connor) that it "was a bowed instrument," whilst the credulous Walker gravely assures us that "a Timpanist [player on the timpan] was simply a musical conductor."

The *timpan* was, in reality, a small stringed instrument, having from three to eight strings, and was played with a bow or plectrum, being also called a *benn crot*, or peaked harp, by an ancient Irish writer. Recent research has almost conclusively proved that the *Kinnor* and the *Trigonon*, or three-stringed *timpan*, are identical, whilst the *Nabla*, or *Psalterium*—a favourite Celtic instrument from the seventh to the eleventh century—was generally of eight strings, and hence called the *Ocht-tedach*, or the eight-stringed.* We meet with constant allusions in the old annalists to *timpan*s and *timpanist*s; and a skilful performer on the *timpan* was held in the highest esteem.

Let me here mention a comparatively unknown item of musical history in regard to Irish surnames. The CURTIN (MacCurtin) family is so named from a hereditary skill on the *cruit*; whilst the family names TUMPANE and TUMPANY are derived from a musical ancestry—famous *timpanist*s, or performers on the *timpan*. The music of this latter instrument was generally known as a *dump*; and various dumps are to be

* Euclid, a name dear to the heart of most schoolboys, tells us that Terpander (who founded the celebrated Lesbian School where Sappho was taught), about the year B.C. 670, invented a new system of musical notation, and extended the tetrachordal lyre to one of seven strings, known as the heptachordal lyre. The *Nabla* is described in an old Irish tract as "a ten-stringed *cruit*"; and St. Isidore says that "there are ten chords used in the Hebrew *Psalterium*, from the number of the Decalogue."

met with in MS. music books of the sixteenth century. A similar musical origin is traced for the surnames Harper, Piper, Fiddler, etc., whilst the family of MACCROSSAN (now Englished CROSBIE) are so-called from the Irish word *Crossan*—a travelling musical comedian. The CRONINS or CRONANS are in like manner designated from a family of street singers.*

The *Buinne* was a primitive oboe, or a flute, and it is glossed by Zeuss as equivalent to *tibia*. O'Curry equates it with "trumpet in the shape of a horn," whilst Dr. O'Sullivan says that it is the Romance *Buisine*, or Bassoon, but I am more inclined to the view of the eighth-century Irish monks, which makes it a sort of pipe, or flute, or *cambucus* (crooked flute, as it is styled by Archbishop Kilwarby, in 1275). Moreover, we read that the Irish were wont to sing to the accompaniment of the *cruit* or the *buinne*, which renders it most probable that this latter was a delicate instrument of the flute genus. In a poem by William de Machault, a writer of the fourteenth century, there is a reference to our Irish *buinne* as "La flaute bretagne," which, in English, was given the name of "Recorder," or "Flute a Bec."

In the twelfth-century manuscripts we meet with allusions to the *bennbuabhal*, a horn of a very resonant character, and *corn* (Chaucer's "corn pipe," and the Welsh "pibcorn,"†) which were horn-pipes. From the Irish *corn-pipe* came the instrument (as also the dance) called hornpipe, which instrument survived till the

* Similarly, the family name *Mac an Bhaird*, or Ward, which really means "son of the bard," is derivable from a bardic origin, just as the *Brehons* (who in some cases changed their names to *Judge*) are the descendants of Irish Judges.

† The "Pibcorn" was played in Wales till near the close of the eighteenth century.

seventeenth century. As we have the hornpipe dances called from the *horn-pipe*, so we have the jig dance from the *geige* or *fidil*. The term "lilt" is from *lilt-pipe*, a form of shepherd's pipe—in fact a simple reed—replaced in after days by the human voice singing the syllables *la la la* to the tune—and hence called "lilting" a tune. Chaucer writes thus in his *House of Fame* :—

"Many a flower and *liltyng horne*,
And pipes made of greene corne."

The *Guthbuinne* was also a horn, but more of the bassoon character. (Compare the "gait-horn" and the "wayt" or oboe.) Of course there is no difficulty in identifying the *feadan* with the fife; and O'Curry has given many references to it from ancient manuscripts. The *Stoc* and the *Sturgan* were forms of clarions or trumpets, though some authors assert that they were horns—whence the name "stock-horn." We learn from the Brehon Laws that cooks and *trumpeters* were to have a special supply of "cheering mead."

Although there is mention of the bagpipe in the Brehon Laws of the fifth century,* this instrument did not come into prominence until the eleventh century. Dr. W. K. Sullivan tells us that the old Irish bagpipe was inflated by the mouth, "and was in every respect the same as the Highland bagpipe of to-day." In the State Papers of the fourteenth century, the bagpipe is expressly termed "the music of the Irish Kernes."

* In one of the ancient Irish historic tales describing the palace of Da Derga at Bohernabreena (Bothar-na-Bruighne), it is stated that "nine pipers, who came from the fairy hills of Bregia," did honour to King Conaire, by their performances. Their names were Bind. Robind, Riarpind, Sihe, Dihe, Deichrind, Umal, Cumal, and Ciallgind, and they are styled "the best pipe-players in the whole world." In this tale the set of pipes is called *tinne*, whilst the band of pipers is named *cetharchoire*, indicating the four parts of the pipe.

One of the earliest drawings of this warlike instrument is in a MS. in the British Museum, dated 1300, describing the Irish who accompanied King Edward to Calais, in which manuscript there is an illuminated initial letter with the quaint device of "a pig, as gravely as possible, playing on the bagpipes." Lovers of mediæval art will be interested in knowing that there is a splendid painting still preserved at Vienna of an Irish piper, by the celebrated Albrecht Dürer, dated 1514; and in Ferguson's *Dissertation* (in Bunting) there is an illustration of "a piper heading an irruption of the native Irish into the English Pale in the sixteenth century."

We are given by Stanihurst, in 1584, a most graphic description of the Irish bagpipes of his time, as follows : "The Irish, likewise, instead of the trumpet, make use of a wooden pipe of the most ingenious structure, to which is joined a leather bag, very closely bound with bands. A pipe is inserted in the side of this skin, through which the piper, *with his swollen neck and puffed-up cheeks, blows in the same manner as we do through a tube.* The skin, being thus filled with air, begins to swell, and *the player presses against it with his arm* [fore-arm]; thus a loud and shrill sound is produced through two wooden pipes of different lengths. In addition to these, *there is yet a fourth pipe, perforated in different places, [having five or six holes], which the player so regulates by the dexterity of his fingers, in the shutting and opening of the holes, that he can cause the upper pipes to send forth either a loud or a low sound at pleasure.*"

Ullan Pipes and Cuisle Pipes are synonymous,

according to Vallancey, inasmuch as Ullan is derived from *Uilleann* = elbow, and *cuisle* means a pipe, whilst even in the last century pipers called their bellows *bolg cuisleann* = fore-arm bellows. Walker adds: "In Ullan Pipes we have, perhaps, the *woollen* Bagpipe of Shakespeare, to which he attributes an extraordinary effect" (*Merchant of Venice*, Act iv., scene 1). The late Professor Morley, in his *English Literature*, says: "The familiar presence of the bagpipe indicates a former Celtic occupation of the fens;" and he adds that "the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe is one of Falstaff's similes for melancholy." Other Shakesperian commentators assert that the "drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe" is not the music of that instrument, but is intended to typify "the croaking of frogs in the fen country." From the sixteenth century the Irish *Uilleann* ("Union") pipes were played as at present, that is, the wind being supplied by a bellows (worked by the fore-arm), just as were the *regal*, or *portative*, organs of that date.

Regarding the introduction of the organ into Ireland, Walker says that "there is no mention of an Organ in our Ecclesiastical History till the year 1641, at the Friary of Multifarnham," etc. This truly absurd statement will give the reader an idea of the value to be attached to many of the facts (?) detailed by Walker, and goes far to justify the strong language in which O'Curry denounces such charlatans on the subject of ancient musical history. Other writers have asserted that the earliest notices of the organ in Ireland date from about the middle of the fifteenth century; but recent research has shown that we can go back to the first decade of the ninth century for the use of "the

king of instruments" in our lovely Hiberno-Romanesque churches.*

About the year 140, according to Optatian, the organs then in use had fifteen pipes, namely, fourteen notes for the seven modes, and one additional for the *Proslambanomenos*, but, in A.D. 350, they were increased in size to twenty-six pipes. In the year 660, Pope Vitalian (657-672), as we learn from John the Deacon, introduced organs into the service of the Church; and they were soon adopted in the Irish Church, as also by the Anglo-Saxons. Under date of the year 814, in the *Annals of Ulster*, we read that the organ in the Church of Cluaincrema (Cloncraft, Co. Roscommon) suffered destruction by an accidental fire. It is almost unnecessary to add that the Irish word *orgán* (oircin) is a loan-word from the Latin *organum*; and *organum* in the Vulgate always means a pipe. Before the death of Charlemagne (814) the organs had fifty-two pipes, with two stops; and subsequently, many improvements and additions were made. During the Middle Ages it was the custom to designate the king of instruments as "a payre of organs,"† a designation which obtained as late as the year 1680.

The next chapter will be appropriately devoted to a brief explanation of ancient Irish scales, and a summing-up of the characteristics of our old melodies.

* Walker also informs us that "the Irish harp received considerable improvements from the ingenuity of Robert Nugent, a Jesuit, in the 15th century [*sic*], who resided for some time in this Kingdom." Even assuming that 15th is a slip for 16th, Father Robert Nugent did not flourish till the 17th century. As is well known, the Jesuit Order was not founded till the year 1549 by St. Ignatius; and it was only in 1561 that Father David Wolfe, S.J., founded the Jesuit mission in Ireland.

† In the 14th century organ pipes were generally called "flutes," and hence the subsequent corruption of *flue* pipes for *flute* pipes. In 1667, Pepys, in his diary, under date of April 4th, alludes to "a fair pair of organs."

CHAPTER IV.

ANCIENT IRISH SCALES.

THE construction of the old Irish scales has afforded a wide field for the most conflicting theories. Even Dr. Sullivan, in his critical introduction to O'Curry, says that the Irish scales were "manifold, and often apparently quite arbitrary, so that the principles upon which they proceed are sometimes incomprehensible to us." Dr. James C. Culwick would have us believe that the Irish scales numbered 15, and he compares our old "gapped" scales to those of the Chinese, Russians, and Zuni Indians. Father Bewerunge, the most recent authority on this subject, only admits four modes namely, Doh, Ray, Soh and Lah.*

From a long and careful study of some thousands of our ancient melodies, I have arrived at the conclusion that the old Irish scale was pentatonic, proceeding as follows: *C D EG AC*. By making each note in this first mode a *tonic*, or keynote, we naturally form four other modes—and thus we get five modes. These five are:—

- 1st. *C D EG AC*
- 2nd. *D EG AC D*
- 3rd. *EG AC D E*
- 4th. *G AC D EG*
- 5th. *AC D EG A*

The notes *F* and *B* are studiously omitted, and the arrangement is made throughout these five modes so as

* See *New Ireland Review*, for June, 1903.

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not to include the fourth and seventh. This omission of *F* and *B* is largely the cause of the quaintness which characterises many of our oldest airs. Between the eighth and twelfth century, the missing, or absent notes of the above five scales were gradually supplied, and thus our ancient gapped scale became almost the self-same as five of the so-called Gregorian modes, namely:—

- 1. Intense Iastian.
- 2. Æolian.
- 3. Intense Hypolydian.
- 4. Iastian.
- 5. Relaxed Iastian.
- 6. Hypolydian.
- 7. Relaxed Hypolydian.
- 8. Dorian.

The third Irish mode (omitting *F* and *B*) is the same as the Phrygian mode in the *E* to *E* scale, with naturals only.* However, I would especially call attention to the beauty of airs constructed in the fourth Irish mode, at least, the variant of it which obtained in the early Anglo-Irish period, when the really characteristic note of this lovely mode had become definitely fixed by the inclusion of the missing seventh, that is *F natural*. This mode being subsequently played and sung in the modern key of *G major* (which, of course, has *F* as an *essential sharp*), had to *flatten* the seventh in order to meet the tonality of the Irish modes, and thus the airs written in this fourth mode were said to have been the *flat seventh*. One of the very best examples of the airs

* Mr. Fuller Maitland, in January, 1904, in an admirable lecture on Folk Music, quoted examples of the Dorian (D) mode, and also of the Ionian (C), Lydian (F) and Mixolydian modes, from the Petrie Collection.

written in this quaint mode is "An Mairtín Ruab" which Moore sadly mutilated in his "adaptation" of "Let Erin Remember"—a mutilation which extended not only to the character of the mode, or scale, but to the very rhythm, or time-period, of the tune. In the light of this explanation it is amusing to read of the *flat seventh* as "one of the most certain indications of an ancient Irish air"! Indeed, for well nigh two centuries, we have invariably one writer copying another as to the "ravishing effect of the flat seventh," ignoring the real truth that it is the modern scale which must needs flatten the seventh in order to equate itself with the old Irish scale of the fourth mode.

Another very popular delusion, which has been quoted *ad nauseam* by English and Irish writers, is the apparent use of the *minor* mode by the ancient Irish. One constantly meets with allusions to the "grand old air in a plaintive minor scale," or to "a captivating ballad in a minor key, so characteristic of old Irish melodies," etc. As a matter of fact, some of our liveliest and most inspiriting dance tunes are in what one would call the modern minor key, whilst many *caoinés* and dirges are in the major scale. Strange as it may seem, there is a vein of melancholy or tenderness throughout all our old tunes, which character is derivable from the peculiarity of scale construction. This is equally true of our hymns, folk-songs, battle-marches, jigs, cradle-songs, elegies, drinking-songs, etc.; and Moore has hit it off very aptly in his exquisite lyric, "Dear Harp of my Country," when he sings:—

"But so oft hast thou echoed the deep sigh of sadness,
That ev'n in thy mirth it will steal from thee still."

According to Walker, the ancient Irish cultivated

three species of musical composition, answering to the three *modes* (the Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian) which the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians, namely, the *Goltraighe*, the *Geantraighe*, and the *Suantraighe*. Hardiman also writes:—"Among the ancient Irish the principal species of musical composition was termed *Avantreacach*. It consisted of three parts—*Geantraighe*, which excited to love; *Goltraighe*, which stimulated to valour and feats of arms; and *Suantraighe*, which disposed to rest and sleep." I may add that the Irish affix, *draiocht*, or *traighe*, means a mode or measure. The ancient *Gol*, which dates from the remotest period, was a distinctive lamentation air; and each province had its own *Gol*. Walker prints the four ancient Lamentation Cries for Connaught, Munster, Leinster, and Ulster. Petrie informs us that "the *Gol* answers exactly to the rhythm and cadence of those words which are recorded, in the *Book of Ballymote*, to have been sung over the grave of a king of Ossory, in the tenth century." Numerous *Suantraighes* are still preserved, better known as "Irish Lullabys," but the *Geantraighe* has more or less disappeared.*

Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves says:—"Ireland was the school of music for the Celts of Great Britain during the Middle Ages, and her minstrelsy remained unrivalled until the Irish Bard, famous for 'the three feats' of solemn [*goltraighe*], gay, [*geantraighe*], and sleep-compelling music [*suantraighe*], degenerated under the stress of the internecine conflict between Saxon and

* The commentator of the meeting at Dromceat by Dallan Forgall, preserved in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, says that "it was a *cruit* without any one of three tunings (*Glesa*) which served to Craiftine the harper, namely, *Suantraighe*, *Goltraighe*, and *Geantraighe*, for the sleeping, the crying, and the laughing modes."

Gael in Ireland, into the strolling minstrel, and finally into the street ballad-singer."

Numerous dissertations have been written on the characteristics of Irish music, but as a nutshell summing up of the whole question, it may briefly be stated that nearly all our ancient tunes are of symmetrically short construction, having the emphatic major sixth, and the thrice-repeated final cadence (the thrice-struck tonic at the close)—and with an undercurrent of tenderness, even in the sprightliest tunes. Apart from an artistic construction peculiarly Celtic, there is an undefinable charm about our ancient melodies that cannot be mathematically expounded. Sir William Stokes, in his *Life of Petrie*, thus writes:—

"It was Petrie's opinion that the music of Ireland stands pre-eminent among that of the other Celtic nations in beauty and power of expression, especially in her *caoinés*, her lamentations, and her love-songs; the latter, by their strange fitfulness, and sudden transitions from gladness to pathos and longing, are marked with a character peculiarly her own. It may well be supposed that some of these delightful tunes are accompanied by songs of corresponding simplicity and pathos."

Petrie himself thus writes regarding our ancient folk-songs, and his description of their construction is applicable to numerous old melodies:—

"These melodies are all in triple or three-four time, and consist of two parts, or strains, of eight bars each, and the same number of phrases, divided into two sections. Of these sections, the second of the first part is, generally, a repetition—sometimes, however, slightly modified—of the section preceding; and the second section of the second part is usually a repetition of the second section of the first part—sometimes also modified in the first, or even the first and second phrases—but as usual in all Irish melodies, always agreeing with it in its closing cadence."

Taken in general, from a technical point of view, the ancient Irish can claim the credit of inventing musical "form"—in fact the germ which developed into the Sonata form. Dr. Pearce, no doubt, wishes us to believe that the latter development is due to the thirteenth century Wolfenbuttel melody of the Christmas hymn: *Corde natus ex Parentis*. However, there is not a shadow of doubt that we have Irish tunes long before this period—certainly before the Anglo-Norman invasion—which are characterised emphatically by an artistically constructed ternary or three-phrase arrangement, that is, a phrase of four bars, not unfrequently repeated, followed by an apparent modulation. Sometimes we meet with phrases of seven bars, namely, of four bars and three bars alternately; whilst a rather unusual rhythm is also to be met with, consisting of four sections of five bars each, each section being barred according to modern ideas into equal or unequal phrases of two bars and three bars. A not unfrequent form of rhythm is nine-eight; and we meet with numerous tunes constructed on the principle of four sections of two bars each in nine-eight time. The jigs in nine-eight time are known as Hop Jigs, Slip Jigs, or Slip Time, and, as Hudson remarks, are "the most ancient, as well as in general the most effective."

But here it may be objected that probably our ancient Irish music was not of a high order, according to the canons of modern criticism. To this I shall briefly answer by quoting five unquestionable authorities.

(1.) Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, Mus. Doc., acknowledges that "long before Norman influence was brought

to bear on native art, there existed in Ireland traditional melodies, the origin of which is lost in antiquity.' (2.) Sir Hubert Parry, after an exhaustive examination of about three thousand tunes in various collections, gives it as his opinion that "Irish folk music is probably *the most human, most varied, most poetical in the world*, and is particularly rich in tunes which imply considerable sympathetic sensitiveness." (3.) Sir Alexander MacKenzie writes in an equally eulogistic strain. (4.) Chappell, who was particularly biassed in favour of English music, avows the "exquisite beauty" of our old tunes; and (5.) the late Brinley Richards was enraptured with "their individuality and tenderness." It is unnecessary to quote the eulogies of Handel, Beethoven, Berlioz, Pleyel, Haydn, and other great masters.

Our own Moore rather ignorantly alludes to the comparatively modern date of many of our "ancient" melodies, the origin of which he is pleased to reckon as "dating no farther back than the last [eighteenth] disgraceful century." In his later years the "bard of Ireland" grudgingly admitted to Dr. Petrie that he was mistaken in his previous views, and he acknowledged that "*the date of those airs is much more ancient*" than he had stated. This admission, however, is not to be found in the various editions of the *Melodies*. However, as Renehan points out, Moore, in his *History of Ireland* (1840) admits "the superior excellence of the music of Ireland *before the English invasion*." Recent research has more than vindicated the undoubted claim of ancient Erin to the possession of the loveliest airs in the world.

CHAPTER V.

IRISH MUSIC BEFORE THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION.

ALTHOUGH in ancient Erin, from the ninth to the middle of the eleventh century, the Danish incursions, as well as internecine conflicts, were serious obstacles to the cultivation of music, yet this very period was one of the greatest lustre for Irish music on the Continent. Of course, there are not wanting a few zealots who would fain have us believe that the Norsemen actually contributed to the preservation of churches and monasteries and schools in Ireland. It is strange to find Dr. Sigerson, in his otherwise excellent book, *The Bards of the Gael and Gall*, enunciating and upholding these peculiar views in reference to the Norsemen as regards Irish literature and music.

All our ancient chronicles are at one in describing the terrible vandalism committed by the Danes in the island of saints and scholars. Keating distinctly assures us that the Norsemen sought to destroy all learning and art in Ireland. His words are most emphatic:—"No scholars, no clerics, no books, no holy relics, were left in church or monastery through dread of them. *Neither bard, nor philosopher, nor musician, pursued his wonted profession in the land.*"

To come to concrete examples, we are told that "Brian Boru's March" and "The Cruiskeen Lawn" are good specimens of "Scandinavian music." This statement is quite erroneous. Both of these airs are genuinely Irish in construction, though I gravely doubt

whether either of them dates from the Norse period, or even from mediæval days.

Despite the troubled condition of Ireland during these two or three centuries, as Dr. Douglas Hyde writes, "she produced a large number of poets and Scholars, the impulse given by the enthusiasm of the sixth and seventh centuries being still strong upon her." Among the distinguished bards of the tenth century was Flann Mac Lonain. In one of his eight poems that have come down to our days he describes a harper called Ilbrechtach, of Slieve Aughty, near Kinalehin.

King Brian, ere his sad death at the glorious victory of Clontarf, in 1014, did a great deal towards repairing the ravages wrought during three centuries. According to the "Wars of the Gael with the Gall," a valuable manuscript that was written during the first quarter of the eleventh century, Brian "sent professors and masters to teach wisdom and knowledge," but he was compelled "to buy books beyond the sea and the great ocean, because the writings and books of the churches and sanctuaries had been burned and drowned by the plunderers."

Whilst we must for ever lament the destruction of our ancient literary and musical manuscripts by the Norsemen, it is gratifying to know that some few musical treasures, written by Irish monks, still remain on the continent. Only to quote one instance, at Zurich, in the library of the Antiquarian Society, may yet be seen a fragment of an Irish *Sacramentarium* and *Antiphonarium*.

Our Irish St. Helias, a native of Monaghan, was elected Abbot of Cologne, in Germany, in 1015. He was the bosom friend of St. Heribert, and ruled the two

monasteries of St. Martin's and St. Pantaleon's, from 1015 to 1040. Mabillon tells us that not only was St. Helias a most distinguished musician, but that he was "the first to introduce the Roman chant to Cologne,"* and he is, most probably, "the stranger and pilgrim" to whom Berno of Reichenau dedicated his well-known musical work, "The Laws of Symphony and Tone."† No greater tribute to the esteem in which the Irish monks were held at Reichenau can be cited than the fact that this monastery (founded in 724 by our Irish St. Pirminius) was placed under the patronage of St. Fintan, a Leinster saint, who flourished circa 830. Walafridus Strabo, Dean of St. Gall's, was Abbot of Reichenau from 824 to 849.

The famous Guido of Arezzo (born in 995, and died May 17th, 1050), Benedictine Prior of the monastery of Avellina, perfected the gamut of twenty sounds, and improved diaphony. He devised the hexachordal scale, *Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La*, from the first syllables of the hymn to St. John the Baptist, commencing "Ut queant laxis." It is not a little remarkable that the melody to which this hymn was sung before Guido's time was not an original one, but had been, years before, composed for an Ode of Horace, commencing "Est mihi nonus," and which is to be met with in a Montpellier MS. of the tenth century. This interesting fact strengthens the view put forward in a previous chapter, that many Irish

* The *Annals of Ulster* tell us that Donnchad, Abbot of Dunshaughlin, died on a pilgrimage at Cologne in 1027, as also did Eochagan, Archdeacon of Slane, in 1042; and, similarly, Brian, King of Leinster, died there in 1052. Of course, the great musical theorist, Franco of Cologne, must have imbibed some of the Irish traditions as to discant or organum.

† Mabillon, *Annales Benedictinorum*, tom. iv., p. 297.

melodies were similarly utilized, or "adapted," by Irish scribes in various copies of the service-books between the eighth and twelfth centuries. Let it not be forgotten that the musical work of St. Ambrose was in great part an adaptation; and, later still, we find the great hymnist, St. Venantius Fortunatus, setting some vintage songs to religious words. Father Michael Moloney, of Bermondsey, some years ago,* stated as his "firm belief," that "some day, not far distant, the fact that Gregorian music was largely influenced by ancient Irish music would be satisfactorily established."† From all the proofs here quoted—cumulative evidence of the very strongest kind—the reader must be convinced of the deep debt which "plain chant" owes to the monks and scribes of ancient Erin.

As amply and conclusively supporting my view I can confidently quote the "organised" arrangement of *Ut tuo propitiatus*, written by an Irish scribe about the year 1095, and interpolated in a tenth century Cornish manuscript now in the Bodleian Library (Bodley, 572). Professor Wooldridge says that it is one of the earliest known examples of "irregular Organum" in contrary movement, employing an independent use of dissonance, and it is written in alphabetical notation. The hymn

* At the Irish Literary Society, London, on January 25th, 1900, the present writer lectured on "A Hundred Years of Irish Music," when a vote of thanks was proposed by the Countess of Aberdeen, and seconded by Father Moloney, the chair being occupied by Mr. C. L. Graves, in the unavoidable absence of Professor Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

† Professor Dickinson, in his monumental book, *The Music of the Western Church* (1902), unhesitatingly adopts the view of Gevaert, that "actual adaptations of older tunes and a spontaneous enunciating of more obvious melodic formulas" are the true sources of the earlier liturgical chant.

itself is portion of the hymn to St. Stephen, and apparently was most popular in England, as well as on the continent, as we meet with a variant of it in the Sarum Antiphonal. In 1897, Professor Wooldridge was of opinion that the hymn was of the same age as the whole of the Bodleian manuscript in which it is included, but, in 1901, as a result of closer examination, he agrees with the experts who assign its date as eleventh century, or certainly not later than the year 1100.

The score of the "organal" part, as stated in a learned article by Dr. Oscar Fleischer, in the *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 1890, is really an adaptation, or setting, of "a Gaelic folk song, afterwards worked upon by a learned composer of that period," the melody being "in a scale of the pentatonic character." I subjoin a translated modern version of this ancient Irish melody from the reconstruction as given by Dr. Fleischer:—

UT TUO PROPITIATUS.

11th cent. Bodl. MS.





In a rare vellum MS. in Trinity College, Dublin (H. 3, 18), compiled about the year 1490, there is an extract given from an *Irish* tract written at the commencement of the thirteenth century, which exhibits a full knowledge of the Guidonian system, and discusses at great length the etymology of the syllables *Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La*. A translation of this extract is quoted in full by Dr. W. K. Sullivan, in his introduction to O'Curry's *Lectures*. A still more convincing proof that the Guidonian gamut was known in Ireland at the close of the eleventh century is the actual preservation of some Irish airs in Morris's Welsh collection, quoted by Dr. Burney, which are said to have been transcribed in the twelfth century.

The great monastery of St. Peter's, Ratisbon, was established by Muiredach (Marianns) Mac Robertagh, in 1076; and St. James's, at Ratisbon, was founded in 1090, with Diuma, or Domnus, a monk from the South of Ireland, as Abbot—being built, according to the *Chronicon Ratisbonense*, "by funds supplied from Ireland to Denis, the Irish Abbot of St. Peter's, at Ratisbon." By a curious irony of fate, the music school of Ratisbon,

IRISH MUSIC BEFORE THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION. 45
originally founded by Irish monks, has been for some years past importing German organists to various Catholic churches in Ireland, whilst Ratisbon itself is the home of the great music publishing establishment of F. Pustet, the printer of various liturgical works used in the Western Church.

CHAPTER VI.

IRISH MUSIC BEFORE THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION
(continued).

DR. LEDWICH gave it as his opinion that "the incomparable skill of the Irish harpers, as attested by Giraldus Cambrensis, could never be predicated of unlearned, extemporaneous, bardic airs, but implies a knowledge of the diagram [sic], and an exact division of the harmonic intervals." On the other hand, Brompton, in the reign of Henry II., says that "the Irish harpers taught in secret, and committed their lessons to memory." The truth is that though the pre-Christian Irish had their ogham music-tablature, and the Irish of the seventh-eleventh century had the neumal accents, after which the Guidonian system was adopted, *very little use was made of written music*, inasmuch as the "divine art" was mostly taught orally, according to traditional rendering, just as the Gregorian Chant was taught on the continent. At the same time there were *written* copies of the musical services; and Gerbert gives a "memoria technica," from the *Breviarium de Musica*, a manuscript of the eleventh century, in which the neumatic names and the signs corresponding thereto are given in hexameter verses. However, in a country so tenacious of its language, music, and customs as Ireland, it is not such a very great loss that no notated copies of our religious tunes or folk-songs exist prior to the eleventh century, as, even if such notated manuscripts survived, they would be absolutely unintelligible to latter-day musi-

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cians, and would only possess an antiquarian value. The self-same must be predicated of all written music until the year 1100. Dr. Haberl thus writes: "During the course of the twelfth century the various manuscript *codices* written in *neums* were transferred into the clearer and larger staff-notation. But, the character of these translations was very much determined by locality, as the possibility of multitudinous interpretations and renderings of the neumatic signs gave rise, in the eleventh century, to different ways of chanting one and the same text, according to the teaching which the singer received in the several cathedrals and cloisters." And, in proof of the comparatively small number of written copies, he adds: "The old teachers relied for the method of singing the *neums* principally on oral traditions. They committed very little to writing, and that little was by no means clear or determined."*

To this opinion may be added the view of the late Mr. H. B. Briggs, in his *Structure of Plainsong*, who says that "Plainsong is recitative," and "no notation can exactly express the rendering that will be given to it by a good singer." It is as well to state that the one-line *stave*, suggested by the Irish ogham scale, was drawn horizontally across the parchment over the words which demanded a musical setting, and the letter F was placed at the beginning of it, meaning an F line, that is to say, indicating the nomenclature of all the neums on the line as F, thus affording a basis for musical pitch, from which was naturally evolved the present musical staff or stave.

* Haberl's *Magister Choralis* translated by the Most Rev. Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of Canea, and Dean of Dublin.

In the new organum of the eleventh century we find in use dissonances of the major and minor third, with the major sixth, and even the second and the seventh, as well as concords. At the close of this century and during the first half of the twelfth, many examples are preserved of hymns and songs containing "imitation" passages, which gave rise to Rondel. But, more particularly, the basis of the mensural system was laid when the *Virga* became the *Longa*, or long note, and the *Punctum* the *Brevis*, or short note.

I have mentioned above that there are old Irish airs preserved in Morris's Welsh collection, dating from the twelfth century, and which are quoted by Dr. Burney. This fact demands a brief reference to Wales, and to the debt which she owes to Ireland for her music.

In consequence of the constant intercourse between Ireland and Wales from the third to the eleventh century, Irish immigrants introduced Celtic minstrelsy, and taught the Welsh people the music of ancient Erin. This musical cult was most warmly taken up during the reign of Howell the Good (915-948). Numerous entries in the Irish Annals, from 950 to 1095, testify to the exodus of Irish harpers to Wales, culminating in the celebrated Eisteddfod of Caerwys, in 1100, which became the model on which the subsequent Welsh festivals were based.

About the year 1059, the King of North Wales was forced to seek an asylum in Ireland, and, whilst abiding with his Queen as an honoured guest in the "Sacred Isle," his son and heir, Griffith ap Conan, was born, who was carefully fostered and instructed in all the polite learning of that period. We are told that the

young prince was particularly enamoured of Irish music, especially the martial tones of the bagpipe. Dermot Mac Maelnambo, King of Leinster, was at this time supreme monarch of Ireland, which position he maintained till his death, on February 6th, 1072. His rule is highly praised by Caradoc of Llancarvan (1156), who frankly asserts that "the Irish devised all the instruments, tunes, and measures in use among the Welsh."* When Prince Griffith came to man's estate, he returned to Wales in order to assert his undoubted right to his father's patrimony, then in the hands of a usurper called Traherne; and the decisive battle of Carno, in 1080, eventuated in his being placed on the throne of North Wales. No sooner was he securely established as king than, between the years 1085 and 1095, he invited over some Irish bards and minstrels, so as to put the music of Wales on the same lines as the Irish musical code.

At the Eisteddfod of Caerwys in 1100, King Griffith, in order to introduce the Irish bagpipes, gave particular prominence to pipe performances, and we read in the Welsh Annals that "*the prize was carried off by an Irishman, who received from the monarch a silver pipe as a reward for his skill.*" However, the crowning glory of this epoch-making Eisteddfod was the evening *Feis*, held under the presidency of the monarch himself, in which laws were enacted for the proper regulation of Welsh minstrelsy.

In order that the future Eisteddfodau should have a genuine Irish character, King Griffith sent to Murtoth

* Powell's *History of Cambria* (1584), p. 191. See also the Note to Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion* by Selden.

O'Brien, styled by St. Anselm "Muriardach, the glorious King of Ireland," for an eminent professor of music, to confer with three Welshmen in drawing up a musical code. King Murtoth (1089-1120) selected a distinguished minstrel called by the Welsh chroniclers "Matholwch the Gwyddilian," or *Malachy the Irishman*, who, in conjunction with the three Welsh bards, drew up rules, according to the Irish system, for orchestration, musical theory, and metre. We read that these doctors "laid down rules for the performance on stringed instruments, the harp and the cruit; and they also drew up twenty-four musical canons, and established twenty-four metres."*

The Welsh annalists tell us that these enactments of the four learned bards were confirmed at a *Feis* held at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, by the said Murtoth O'Brien, King of Ireland, "who ratified them by his prerogative and influence, commanding all to maintain them;" and thus was settled for ever the question of Welsh minstrelsy. It is interesting to add that a daughter of our Irish monarch was married to Arnuph de Montgomery, Earl of Pembroke; and King Murtoth himself died as a monk in the famous monastery of Lismore, Co. Waterford, on the fourth of the Ides of March, 1120.

Under date of A.D. 1110, the veracious *Annals of Ulster* chronicle the death of Ferdomnach the Blind, Lector of Kildare, who is described as a *Cruiitirecht*, or "Master of Harping." Some years later, namely, in 1119, there is a record of the death of Diarmuid

* See the "Celtic Origin of the Welsh Eisteddfod" by the present writer in the *New Ireland Review* for March, 1898.

O'Boylan, "chief Music-master in Ireland," who was killed by some ruffians in his own house, as were also his wife and his two sons, "with 35 others, his guests and retainers."

In Dowling's *Annals of Ireland* in connection with the year 1137, there is chronicled the demise of Griffith ap Conan King of North Wales, "born in Ireland of an Irish mother, who had led back with him from Ireland, harps, timpani, cruits, cytharæ, and harpers." The intercourse between Wales and Ireland was very frequent at this epoch, and in 1142, Dowling has the following entry—"Cadwallader, the son of Griffith ap Conan, was forced to fly into Ireland, and brought back with him, for 2,000 marks, the son of O'Carroll, captain of 1,000 fighting men, together with spoils and booty."

The Irish character of the verses written by Prince Howell, son of Owen, King of North Wales, about the year 1165, is most remarkable. This Howell (whose mother was the daughter of an Irish chieftain) assumed the government of his petty kingdom on the death of his father, in 1169, and ruled till 1171, when he came over to Ireland to claim the property of his grandfather, in right of his mother, the heiress. It is only pertinent to add that Welsh poetry and minstrelsy flourished exceedingly from 1140 to 1240, in which latter year Llewellyn the Great died.* With the decline of the Irish element, and the decay of the bards towards the close of the thirteenth century, came the conquest of Wales, and its annexation to the "predominant partner," in 1283.

Scotland, even in a greater degree than Wales, owes

* *Ibid.*

her music to Ireland, as a result of two colonizations from *Scotia Major*, or ancient Erin—the first under Cairbre Riada (*a quo Dal Riada*) in A.D. 130, and the second under Fergus, Lorne, and Angus, the sons of Erc, in A.D. 504.

Giraldus Cambrensis, in the twelfth century, writes as follows:—"Scotland and Wales, *the former by reason of her derivation*, the latter from intercourse and affinity, seek with emulous endeavours to imitate Ireland in music." He adds:—"The Irish use and delight in but two instruments, the harp and the viol [cruic]; the Scotch in the harp, viol, and bagpipe; the Welsh in the harp, pipes, and bagpipe. The Irish also use *brass wires* for their harps in preference to those of gut."*

O'Donovan says that "the present language of the Highlands passed from Ireland into the Highlands about A.D. 504; and a regular intercourse has ever since been kept up between both countries, *the literature and music of the one having been ever since those of the other.*"

Ruined churches and monasteries, shrines, wells, inscribed stones, and solidly founded tradition—all point to the very close kinship between the parent Scots of Ireland and their progeny in Caledonia, Alba, or *Scotia Minor*. Somerled MacGillabride, Chief of Uriel (Louth, Armagh, and Monaghan), was recognised as King of Argyle, that is, Lord of the Isles, about the middle of the twelfth century. In a naval battle which took place in 1156, this same Irish king (who died in 1164) captured Iona and the rest of the Southern Hebrides from Godred, Norse King of the Isles, and he induced Flaherty O'Brolcain (Brollaghan or Bradley), Abbot-Bishop of

* *Top. Dist.* iii. c. xi.

Derry, to take over the Abbacy of Iona *in commendam*, who accordingly did so, and retained his Presidency of the Columban monasteries till his death in 1175.

King Somerled's sons, Reginald, Dubhgall, and Angus, and their successors, held sway over the west of Scotland till the end of the fifteenth century, namely, 1493, when the Lordship of the Isles was surrendered to the Scottish Crown. "This will account for the old bonds between *Scotia Major* and *Scotia Minor* being drawn still closer, and for the number of Irish bards—O'Dalys and others—entertained at Dunstaffnage, Inverary, and other western strongholds, during this long period, and the vitality of the old stories and poems that originated in the native country of these minstrels."*

* *Dublin University Magazine* for January, 1864.

CHAPTER VII.

IRISH MUSIC BEFORE THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION
(continued)

It would be merely slaying the slain to bring forward any of the silly arguments that formerly were availed of by Dempster and others to claim as natives of Scotland the ancient Irish Scots. It is now universally conceded that even at the close of the eleventh century the Irish were called Scots; and John Major says that "it is certain the present (fifteenth century) Scots of Caledonia owe their origin to Ireland."

Even England must acknowledge its indebtedness for music to Ireland, "the lamp of learning in the West," from the fifth to the twelfth century. It was our Irish missionaries who introduced Irish music and inaugurated plain-chant at Lindisfarne, Durham, Ripon, Lichfield, Malmesbury, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cornwall, Glastonbury, etc. St. Bede and St. Aldhelm vie with each other in their eulogies on Irish scholars.

Old neumatic notation is to be found in a copy of the *Codex Amiatinus*, one of the three books which Ceolfrid, Abbot of Jarrow, took with him, in the year 716, to Rome, as a present to Pope St. Gregory II. These neums, which were written about the year 704, are set for the Lamentations of Jeremias; and the saintly Abbot died on his way to the Eternal City, in 716. Ceolfrid was the tutor and predecessor of St. Bede; and, as is well known, the monks of Jarrow and Wearmouth were taught by the Irish monks of

Northumbria, of which district our Irish St. Aidan was first Bishop.

The learned Alcuin studied at Clonmacnoise, in 755-760, under St. Colgu the Wise, whom he styles his "blessed Master and dear Father." In 803, as an old man, this great English scholar, when he had resigned his scholastic labours, querulously informs Charlemagne of "the daily increasing influence of the Irish at the school of the Palace."

Suidhne Mac Maelumai (O'Molloy), the thirty-fourth Abbot of Clonmacnoise, is justly styled by the old chroniclers as *doctor Scotorum peritissimus*, whose best known pupil was Dicuil the Geographer. In the year 890, he was one of the three Irish sages who were summoned to England by Alfred the Great, to devise a scheme of studies after the manner of the Irish Universities.

During the winter of the year 941, Muirheartach of the Leathern Cloaks (heir apparent to the throne of Tara) made a circuit of Ireland, and brought away with him the provincial princes or their sons to his palace at Royal Aileach, on the eastern shore of the Swilly, near Derry, where he detained them for five months, after which he sent them to the Ard Righ of Ireland, Donogh II. His secretary, Cormac an Eigeas, has left us an account of this circuit of Ireland, in which we read that the evenings were generally devoted to music:—

"Music we had on the plain and in our tents—
Listening to its strains we danced."

Towards the close of the eleventh century, Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick, made an effort to displace the existing Irish liturgical "uses" in favour of the Roman Rite, but was not successful. In his *De Usu Ecclesiastico*

he tells us that there was a great diversity and variety in the Church offices in Ireland, so much so that even a learned cleric, accustomed to one particular form of liturgy, would be quite bewildered in a neighbouring diocese, where a different Use obtained. It is more than probable that the Ambrosian chant—introduced by St. Patrick—and the Irish modification of the Gregorian chant continued to be sung in most of the Irish churches till the year 1125.

St. Malachy, Legate of the Holy See, got the Roman chant adopted throughout the archdiocese of Armagh in 1148; and, a few years later, Donogh O'Carroll, Prince of Uriel, got a complete set of liturgical books—Antiphonaries as well as Missals—copied by an Irish scribe. This Donogh O'Carroll, the founder of the Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, Knock, County Louth, and a munificent benefactor to Mellifont Abbey, died, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, on Thursday, the tenth of the moon, Kalends of January, 1170; and "he it was for whom were written the Book of Knock Abbey, and the chief office-books (books used for the singing of the Divine Office) for the ecclesiastical year, and the chief books of the Mass.*

John of Salisbury, about the year 1165, highly extols the music of Ireland; and his testimony is all the more valuable as he was not very favourable towards this country. He declares that in the Crusade of Godfrey of Bouillon, in 1099, *there would have been no music at all had it not been for the Irish Harp*, or, as Fuller says, "the consort of Christendom could have made no musick if the Irish Harp had been wanting."

* *Annals of Ulster*, vol. ii., pp. 160, 161.

The great St. Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin, in 1165, dissatisfied with the Dano-Celtic system of liturgical chant in Christ Church Cathedral, introduced the Arroasian Canons of the Order of St. Victor—a reform of the Augustinians—who sang the Divine Office daily, presided over by the Archbishop himself.

Music was an especial feature in the school of the Culdees at Armagh, as has been amply demonstrated by the late Bishop Reeves. The *Annals of Ulster* give a lengthened obituary notice of Flann O'Gorman, "chief lector of Armagh and of all Ireland," in 1174, "on Wednesday before Easter, the 13th of the Kalends of April [March 20], in the 70th year of his age." He had been President-General of the Universities throughout Ireland, and was held in the highest esteem.*

Even after the formation of a Chapter in the Cathedral of Armagh, the Prior of the Culdees was invariably Precentor, or Chief Chanter, whilst the brethren of the *Colidei* acted as Vicars Choral.† These Culdees were the representatives of the old Columban order of monks; and their school at Armagh lasted from the close of the ninth century to the time of Elizabeth. The diocese of Meath is still a silent witness of the ancient Celtic monastic form of church government, and has never had a cathedral body or Chapter, nor yet a Cathedral.

In 1168 died "the Chief Ollamh of Ireland in harp playing," and in 1171, "the timpanist Ua Coinnecan. Ard-Ollamh of the North of Ireland, was

* *Ibid.*

† Among the treasures exhibited in the Gregorian Congress, in Rome, during Easter week, 1904, was a copy of St. Gregory's *Moralia*, in the last page of which was inserted the hymn, "C Christi Martyr"—of the Irish St. Killian, in musical notation of the twelfth century.

killed by the Cinel-Conaill, with his wife and with his people."

Irish bishops, priests, and clerics were accustomed, in the twelfth century, to carry round with them small harps, both for the purpose of accompanying the sacred chant, as also for their own delectation. This fact is expressly stated by Archdeacon Gerald Barry, from personal observation at the close of the same century:—"Hinc accidit, ut Episcopi et Abbates, et Sancti in Hibernia viri cytharas circumferre et in eis modulando pie delectari consueverint."*

The neums or accents of the Irish corresponding to the Latin *Acutus*, *Modicus*, *Gravis*, and *Circumflexus*, are: *Ardceol*, *Ceol*, *Basceoil*, and *Circeoil*, indicating pitch; whilst the mediæval Irish had their own characters to represent mensural music, corresponding to the *Longa* and the *Brevis*, that is to say, practically our modern Semibreve and Minim. Unison was called *caomhluighe*, or lying together; the fifth was termed *Tead na feithe olach*, or string of the leading sinews; the octave below was *cronan*, etc. In fact, each string of the harp had its own particular name; and the ancient minstrels had an infinite variety of terms for musical rhythm and expression.†

* Cambrensis, *Topog. Hib.*, Dist. c. xii.

† The following is a brief description of the dress worn by ancient Irish harpers, as is chronicled in the "Bruidhean da Derga," one of the oldest Irish sagas now known, and contained in *Leabhar na hUidhre*: "I saw another row of nine harpers. Nine branching, curling heads of hair on them; nine grey winding cloaks about them: nine brooches of gold in their cloaks: nine circlelets of pearls round their hands: nine rings of gold around their thumbs: nine torques of gold around their ears: nine torques of silver round their throats: nine bags with golden faces in the side-wall: nine wands of white silver in their hands." Dr. Hyde dates this saga as of the seventh century if not earlier.

In regard to the old Irish form of "organising," O'Curry writes: *Rind* was music consisting of full harmony, while *Leithrind*, or half Rind, was one or other of the two corresponding parts which produced the harmonious whole, and these parts were the bass and treble notes, or the bass and treble strings—the *Trom Threda* and the *Goloca*, or the heavy and the thin strings. *Coir* is another Irish term for harmony, and is mentioned in the Brehon laws.* From a passage in the Life of St. Brigid by Anmchad, Bishop of Kildare, who died in the year 980, it is evident that the harp was at that period employed as a favourite accompaniment for part-singing.

The commentary on the Elegy on St. Columba, which was certainly written before the year 1100, contains musical allusions, including the *ceis* and the "bass chord in the harp of Crabtene." From the well-known passage of our Irish John Scotus Erigena, in his tract *De Divisione Naturae*, written about the year 864, it is perfectly clear that the free Organum of the Fourth, or of the *Diatesseron*, was well known to the Irish of the ninth century—that is to say, a hundred and fifty years before the appearance of the *Scholia Enchiriadis* and the *Musica Enchiriadis*. Professor Wooldridge, in the *Oxford History of Music*, says that "Erigena's description of the alternate separation and coming together of the voices quite admits of application to this method." For the benefit of the musical student, I give the Latin passage of Scotus:—

"Organicum melos ex diversis qualitatibus et quantita-

* The seven Irish words for concerted music are:—*cómseinm*, *cóicetui*, *aíabse*, *cepóc*, *claiiss*, *clais-cetui*, and *foacanad*. In *Cormac's Glossary* (p. 43) *cómseinm* refers to instrumental harmony, whilst *cóicetui* is given as "singing together"—*clais-cetui* signifying "choral singing."

tibus conficitur dum viritim separatimque sentiuntur voces longe a se discrepantibus intensionis et remissionis proportionibus segregatae dum vero sibi invicem coaptantur *secundum certas rationabilesque artis musicae regulas per singulos tropos naturalem quandam dulcedinem reddentibus.*"

From Coussemaker it appears that a monk who wrote soon after the death of Charlemagne alludes to the art of "organising," and he concludes that the practice of harmony was certainly known in the early part of the ninth century.*

Brompton, writing in the reign of Henry II., waxes enthusiastic over the very advanced skill of Irish musicians in the twelfth century on the cruit, timpan, and bagpipe; and he extols "*the animated execution, the sweet and pleasing harmony, the quivering notes and intricate modulations of the Irish*"—"crispatis modulis et intricatis notulis, efficiunt harmoniam" (Hist. Anglic. Script., p. 1075).

In justice to Tom Moore it must be acknowledged that he pointed out the ridiculous error into which Walker and Bunting had been led, quoting from Beaufort, owing to a mistranslation of Brompton. Walker makes the foregoing extract as signifying that the Irish had "*two sorts of harps, the one bold and quick, the other soft and pleasing*"!!!

This brings us to the epoch of the Anglo-Norman invasion; and, as contemporary evidence is always of

* There is a manuscript translation into English of Erigena's valuable tract, made by the late William Larminie (whose death, in 1900, was a great loss to Irish studies), which is now in the National Library of Ireland, Kildare-street, Dublin. It is said to be the only English version of Erigena's work. The translation is in two quarto volumes, and was presented to the library by the author's brother.

the first importance, I cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting the following eulogy on the Irish school of harpers from the pen of Gerald Barry, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of St. David's, who came to Ireland in 1183:—

"They are incomparably more skilful than any other nation I have ever seen. For their manner of playing on these instruments [cruits, clairsheachs, and timpans], unlike that of the Britons to which I am accustomed, is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the melody is both sweet and pleasing. It is astonishing that in such a complex and rapid movement of the fingers the musical proportions [as to rhythm] can be preserved, and that throughout the difficult modulations on their various instruments the harmony, notwithstanding shakes and slurs, and variously intertwined organising, is completely observed."

The Latinity of Giraldus is not easy to give in an English dress, but he wishes to display his knowledge of musical technicalities as then in vogue. He describes "the striking together of the chords of the *diatesseron* [the fourth degree of the scale], and *diapente* [the fifth] introducing B flat, and of the "tinkling of the small strings coalescing charmingly with the deep notes of the bass"—clearly pointing to the Irish free organum of the fourth, and that of *diapente*, including the discord of the Imperfect Fifth interval. He concludes as follows:—"They delight with so much delicacy, and soothe so softly, that the excellence of their art seems to lie in concealing it."*

* *Topographia Hiber.*, Disp. iii., cap. xi. In the original Latin, the terms *proportio*, *crispatos*, *modulos*, *organa*, *dispari paritate*, *discordi*, *concordia*, *consona*, etc., can only mean, as Renehan writes, "the rhythmical measure of time, the slur and graces, the organizing or counterpoint, the harmony of discords, and all the then latest inventions of modern music." (Renehan's *History of Music*, p. 163.)

Not even a professed panegyrist of our twelfth-century Irish musicians could use more flattering language than the foregoing, and, therefore, such testimony from the prejudiced bishop-elect of St. David's should be highly valued. Rev. James F. Dimock, who has edited Giraldus under the direction of the English Master of the Rolls, says:—"Giraldus had not an idea that anything he thought or said could by any chance be wrong"; and "he was replete with the exact qualities, the very reverse of what are needed to form an impartial historian." For all that, the observant Archdeacon was completely captivated by the charm of Irish music, and he has left us the above imperishable record. Well does Moore sing:—

"The stranger shall hear thy lament on his plains -
The sigh of thy harp shall be sent o'er the deep.
Till thy masters themselves, as they rivet thy chains,
Shall pause at the song of their captive, and weep."

CHAPTER VIII.

IRISH MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

THE year 1216 is remarkable for an incident from which we get a clue to the origin of the so-called "Brian Boru's Harp." So much legend has attached to the historic instrument of that name (now housed in Trinity College, Dublin), said erroneously to have belonged to King Brian, that a sketch of the real facts will not be unwelcome to critical readers.

Muiredach O'Daly, of Lissadil, Co. Sligo, was a famous Irish minstrel at the opening of the thirteenth century. In 1216, Donal *mor* O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, sent his steward (Finn O'Bradley) into Connaught, to collect tribute, who was slain, in a fit of anger, by O'Daly, for a supposed insult to the bardic profession. The bard fled to Athenry (where, for a while, he was protected by Richard de Burgo), and thence to Thomond and Dublin, pursued by O'Donnell himself, and finally escaped to Scotland, where he remained for some years [1217-1222].

Whilst in Scotland, O'Daly wrote three celebrated poems to O'Donnell, "who permitted him to return unmolested to his native country, and even restored him to his friendship." These Irish poems were fortunately preserved in Scotland, in the Dean of Lismore's Book;* and O'Daly was known as *Albanach* that is, the Scotch man, from his residence in Albania, or Alba.

* The editor (Rev. Mr. MacLachlan) of this valuable Gaelic MS. says that O'Daly "was the ancestor of the MacVurricks, bards to the MacDonalds of Clanranald."

Meantime, Donnchadh Cairbre O'Briain, King of Thomond, sent his own harp—"the jewel of the O'Briens"—as a pledge, to Scotland (for the ransom or return of the bard O'Daly), where it remained for over 80 years. Thus, we can accurately trace the history of a rare harp of the O'Brien sept, sent to Scotland, about the year 1221, as a forfeit, by the valiant King of Thomond, whose death took place on March 8th, 1243.

About the year 1229, Gillabride Mac Conmidhe [Mac Conmee, Mac Namee, or Conmee], a famous Ulster bard, was commissioned by King O'Brien to endeavour to ransom the much-prized harp. In response to this request Mac Conmidhe—also known by the soubriquet of *Albanach* on account of his many visits to Scotland—composed the well-known "Ransom song," in commemoration of his playing on its chords for the last time. At that time, the power of a bard was very great, and even a song fetched a high price; but, alas! the lovely harp of the O'Briens—the so-called harp of Brian Boru—would not be restored for "whole flocks of sheep," and so, as O'Curry considers, it remained in Scotland until Edward I. took it with him to Westminster. Finally, on July 1st, 1543, when Henry VIII. created Ulick Mac William de Burgo Earl of Clanrickarde, he presented the Earl with this Irish harp, which had belonged to Donnchadh Cairbre O'Briain.

Vallancey says that this harp, having reverted to the Earl of Thomond, was purchased by Lady Huxley, for "twenty rams and as many swine of English breed," and "bestowed by her to her son-in-law, Henry Mac Mahon, of Clenagh, County Clare,* who about the year

* The husband of Lady Elizabeth de Burgh.

1736, bestowed it on Mat MacNamara of Limerick, Esq., Counsellor-at-Law, and some years Recorder of that city." In the year 1760, Arthur O'Neill, the great harpist, played on this venerable instrument, newly strung for the occasion, through the streets of Limerick. It was bequeathed by Mr. MacNamara in 1778 to Ralph Ouseley, Esq., of Limerick, who, in 1781, presented it to the Right Hon. Colonel Conyngham, and, at length, in 1782, Conyngham donated it to Trinity College, Dublin.*

The following is Petrie's description of the O'Brien harp:—

"From recent examination, it appears that this harp had but one row of strings; that these were 30 in number, not 28, as was formerly supposed, 30 being the number of brass tuning pins and of corresponding string holes. It is 32 inches high, and of exquisite workmanship; the upright pillar is of oak, and the sound board of red sawn; the extremity of the fore-arm, or harmonic curved bar, is capped in part with silver, extremely well wrought and chiselled. It also contains a large crystal set in silver, under which was another stone, now lost. The buttons or ornamental knobs at the side of the curved bar are of silver. The string holes of the sound board are neatly ornamented with escutcheons of brass carved and gilt. The four sounding holes have also had ornaments, probably of silver, as they have been the object of theft.† The bottom which it rests upon is a little broken and the wood very much decayed. The whole bears evidence of having been the work of a very expert artist."

There is a remarkable entry in connection with the year 1225 in the *Annals of Lough Cé*, amply demonstrate

* Egerton MSS., No. 74.

† In 1876 one of these ornaments was found in the Phoenix Park, (See *Journal R.S.A.*, for October, 1878.)

ing the progress of instrumental music at that period, especially the cultivation of the harp:—"A.D. 1225. Aedh, the son of Donlevy O'Sochlann, Vicar of Cong, a master of vocal music and harp tuning, the inventor of a new method of tuning, a proficient in all arts, poetry, engraving, and writing, and other arts, died this year."

Apropos of harp-tuning, I may here repeat what has been incidentally mentioned in Chapter II., that this was effected by means of the ceir or harp fastener. Furthermore, *glér* is the Irish term for tuning; and we find in the Brehon Laws an allusion to the *Croann Gléra*, that is, tuning-tree or key. But, as has so frequently been insisted on, the theory of music and the rules of the minstrel's art were the outcome of many years of weary study. Blessed Edmund Campion, S.J., in his *Account of Ireland* written in 1571, tells us that he himself had seen the Irish students "chanting out their lessons piecemeal," which they were wont to "conn by rote."

"Sumer is icumen in"—the earliest known version of a double canon with a ground bass, in England—is merely a harmonised arrangement of a phrase taken from the old Irish tune: "*Uá an Samraó ag teáct*," which may be Englished: "The Summer is Coming," sung time out of mind in ancient Erin to usher in the summer season. This Irish air, wedded by Moore to his lyric "Rich and Rare," was copied by John Fornsete, a Benedictine monk, of Reading, about the year 1230, and, "though animated in its measure," as Lady Morgan writes, "yet, still, like all the Irish melodies, breathes the very soul of melancholy." Its Irish origin was clearly proved by Dr. Young, Protestant

Bishop of Clonfert, at the close of the eighteenth century, who ably refuted the English claim to it, as advocated by Dr. Burney, in his *History of Music*.*

In this connection, Ireland can justly claim the invention of what is now called "ground bass" or "pedal point," as its origin must be sought in the old Irish *cronan*, an allusion to which is to be found as far back as A.D. 592, when it is described as "the most excellent of music." St. Colman Mac Lenan, founder of the See of Cloyne, gives us to understand that the *Διούρε* (*Coirur Cronain*) was the most favourite form of part singing with the educated musicians of the sixth century.† O'Curry calls it "a low murmuring accompaniment or chorus, which, from its name *Cronan* must have been produced in the throat, like the purring of a cat"; and he adds that the word "croning" [crooning] is an abbreviated anglicised form of "cronaning"—not humming, but purring—a corruption of which has resulted in the calling an old woman a "crone."

Not so long since, it was generally believed that the inclusion of the *harp* in the arms of Ireland only dated from the reign of Henry VIII., but the fact is that our national instrument appears on coins issued by King John and King Edward I.; and, in 1251, we read that "the new coinage was stamped in Dublin with the impression of the King's head in a triangular harp." A harp was originally the peculiar device of the arms of the Leinster province, and it was subsequently applied

* Bishop Young died on November 28th, 1800.

† There are seven Irish words to designate various forms of Harmony—in particular *foacanim*, which is glossed by Zeuss as *succino* or "singing under."

to the whole kingdom of Ireland, namely, in heraldic language, "on a field *vert*, a harp *or*, stringed *argent*."

Under date of 1269, in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, is recorded the death of Aedh O'Flynn, "a good musician. A similar entry occurs in the *Annals of Ulster*, but the surname is given as "O'Finn," and he is described as a "master of minstrelsy." [ṛḁḁ ḁḁḁḁḁḁ.]

The European fame of the Irish harp was at this epoch well sustained, as is best attested by the following quotation from Dante (1265-1321):—

"This most ancient instrument was brought to us from Ireland, where they are excellently made, and in great numbers, the inhabitants of that island having practised on it for many ages. Nay, they even place it in the arms of the kingdom, and paint it on their public buildings, and stamp it on their coins, giving as a reason their being descended from the Royal Prophet David."*

Ralph Higden, a distinguished historiographer, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, describes the music of the Irish harp as "musica peritissima." John de Fordun, a Scottish priest, who wrote in the same century, expressly says that "Ireland was the fountain of music in his time, whence it then began to flow into Scotland and Wales."†

In 1329, the annalist, Clyn, has the following entry concerning the massacre of Sir John Bermingham, Earl of Louth, at Bragganstown, near Ardee, on June 10th of that year:—

* *Dialogo di Vincenzo Galilei*, A.D. 1589 (not 1581 as stated by Bunting).

† Walker's *History of the Irish Bards* (1786).

"Maelrooney Mac Cerbhaill [O'Carroll], chief musician of the kingdom, and his brother Gillakeigh—a famous timpanist and harper, so pre-eminent that he was a Phoenix in his art—were killed in that company, and with him fell twenty timpanists who were his scholars."

The *Annals of Ulster* particularly praise the musical powers of Mac Cerbhaill, whom they describe as "the blind Cerbhaill, namely, Maelruanaigh, the most eminent timpanist in Ireland and of Scotland, and of the whole world." The cognomen *caoch* was given to him "because his eyes were not straight, but squinted"; and, Clyn adds, "if he was not the inventor of chord music, yet, of all his predecessors and contemporaries, he was the corrector, teacher, and director." The author of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* further informs us that "no man in any age ever heard or shall hereafter hear a better timpanist."

According to Hardiman, this harper, O'Carroll, composed the lovely song: "Eleanor Kirwan," but "every effort," he adds, "to recover the music has proved fruitless, although it was well known in Galway in the last [eighteenth] century." The air "is supposed to have died out with an old musical amateur of the name of French, who resided in Galway a few years ago; and thus perished, perhaps, the last known relic of the genius of O'Carroll."*

It must, however, be borne in mind that the battle of Bragganstown was in reality an Anglo-Irish feud; and an ancient chronicler relates that an old nurse distinctly gave warning to the Earl of Louth and his attendants

* Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, vol. i., p. 361.

of their approaching doom, in a song commencing: "All the joy of my heart is the hearing." I may add that on the Patent Rolls of Edward III., a pardon, dated May 31st, 1330, was granted to those Anglo-Irish who took part in the conflict, and, amongst others, to John the harper, of Ardee, Co. Louth.*

A charming legend is told in connection with the founding of the Franciscan Friary at Irrelagh—better known as Muckross Abbey, Killarney—in the year 1340.

MacCarthy Mor, i.e., Donnell, son of Tadhg, had vowed to build a monastery for Franciscans in thanksgiving for his delivery from a great danger. He found it difficult to select a suitable locality. While he hesitated a vision appeared to him, warning him to erect the convent nowhere but at *Carraig-an-chiuil* (the Rock of Music). He knew of no such place, and dispatched a number of his followers in various directions to make inquiries. The search was unsuccessful; no one had even heard of the name. They were returning in despair when they heard the most enchanting music issuing from a rock in *Oirbeallac* [Irrelagh]. They hurried home in all haste, and related their experience to MacCarthy. He concluded that this was *Carraig-an-chiuil*—the Rock of Music spoken of in the vision—and commenced to build the monastery without delay.†

Under date of 1345, an Irish musician appears in the dual capacity of bard and minstrel. In the celebrated *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*, or Book of the Dun Cow (compiled and transcribed, in the year 1100, by Maelmuire Mac Kelleher), there is an entry, at page 37, from which we

* *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 4 Edward III., p. 532.

† *History of the Franciscan Order in Ireland*, sub. "Irrelagh."

learn that Sigraídh O'Cuirnin, who had carefully perused said volume, in the year 1345, begged a prayer for the writer of the book. This Sigraídh O'Cuirnin, hereditary poet and ollav of the O'Rourkes, therein described as "poet and musician," died on a pilgrimage to Clonmacnoise in 1347.*

In reference to the hospitality extended by the Irish people of all classes to minstrels and bards, we read in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, under date of the year 1351:—

"William MacDonogh *maenach* O'Kelly invited all the Irish poets, brehons, bards, harpers, etc., in Ireland to his house, upon Christmas of this year, where every one of them was well used during the Christmas holidays, and gave contentment to each of them at the time of their departure, so as every one was well pleased, and extolled William for his bounty."

Thierry thus writes:—"Every house preserved two harps, always ready for travellers, and he who could best celebrate the liberties of former times, the glory of patriots, and the grandeur of their cause, was rewarded with a more lavish hospitality."

For the year 1357, there is a record of the demise of Donlevy O'Carroll, "an excellent musician," and "a noble master of melody, the person that was best in his own art in Ireland." Three years later, according to the *Annals of Ulster*, died Gilla-na-naem O'Conway, "ollam of Thomond as Timpanist," whom other annalists describe as "chief professor of music in Thomond."

In 1361, the obit is chronicled of Magrath O'Finn, "chief professor of Siol Murray (Sligo) in music and

* *Facsimiles of National MSS. of Ireland* by Sir John T. Gilbert.

minstrelsy," followed, three years later by that of Bryan O'Brien—also called Bran Ua Briain—an eminent timpanist—or performer on the *tiompán*.

A terrible blow was given to music in Ireland by the passing of the iniquitous Statute of Kilkenny, in 1367, which made it penal to receive or entertain Irish bards, pipers, harpers, minstrels, rhymers, etc., the ostensible reason being that "these and such like often came as spies on the English." However, as Dr. Joyce writes, "it was intended to apply only to the English, and was framed entirely in their interests—its chief aim being to withdraw them from all contact with the 'Irish enemies,' and to separate the two races for evermore."*

From the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, we learn that John Mac Egan and Gilbert O'Barden, two most famous harpers of Conmaicne (Ardagh), died in 1369; and Andrew Mac Senaigh, "master of melody," died of the plague, at Tuam, in 1371—whose name is given as "Amhlaim Mac Senaigh, accomplished emperor of melody," by the Ulster Annalists.

On the Patent Rolls of the year 1375 (49 Edw. III.), we find a license granted to Donal O'Moghan, an Irish minstrel [*Ministrallus Hibernicus*], "for that he not alone was faithful to the King, but was also the cause of inflicting many evils on the Irish enemies," permitting him, contrary to the *Statute of Kilkenny*, to dwell within the English Pale.† Hardiman adds: "This recreant bard was one of the very few traitors of his Order, of which Patriotism was the motto and ruling principle. Like Alfred, the Irish bards went amongst the enemy to

* Joyce's *Concise History of Ireland* (1895), p. 108.
† Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, vol. i., p. xviii.

learn their situation, strength and intentions, which they never failed to report to their countrymen."

Under date of 1379, the Four Masters chronicle the obit of Gillacuddy O'Carroll, "the most delightful minstrel of the Irish," who is called by the Ulster Annalists, "William, son of Gillacuddy O'Carroll," Evidently the musical abilities of the O'Carroll family had not diminished since the days of Maelroony O'Carroll—so lauded by the Irish chroniclers, as also by the Anglo-Irish annalist, Clyn, who died in 1349, as Guardian of the Franciscan Friary, Kilkenny.

One of the many legends that for long obtained currency was the ascription of the song, "*Eibhlín a Rúin*,"—*vulgo* "Aileen Aroon"—to Donogh *mór* O'Daly, of Finvarra, Cistercian Abbot of Boyle, who was called "the Ovid of Ireland," and who died in the year 1244. Most writers concur in dating the music and words as from "the first half of the thirteenth century," whilst the more sceptical tell us that it was composed in "the latter portion of the sixteenth, or the first half of the seventeenth century." The sober truth is that this exquisite melody, so admired by Handel (as we learn on the unimpeachable testimony of the Venerable Charles O'Conor, of Belanagare), was written in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. It was composed by Carroll *mór* O'Daly, about the year 1390, in honour of Eibhlín Kavanagh, of Polmonty Castle, near New Ross, Co. Wexford; and all readers are familiar with the romantic story of how our Irish harper and composer successfully won the hand of Kavanagh's fair daughter.*

* Cormac Comyn (Cormac *dall*) was the first to furnish an account of the circumstances under which "*Eibhlín a Rúin*," was

The minstrel O'Daly, who is described by the old annalists as "chief composer of Ireland, and Ollav of the country of Corcomroe," died early in 1405.

As a proof of the estimation in which Irish minstrels were held at this epoch, we learn from Froissart that, during the Christmas and Spring of 1394-5, at the sumptuous banquets given by King Richard II. to the Irish chieftains who visited him, these princes, contrary to English ideas, "had their minstrels and principal servants sitting at the same table, and eating from the same dish as they themselves."

In connection with the year 1399, the death is chronicled of Conla Mac Neal O'Neill, "a great benefactor of the professors of Irish poetry and music."* During the same year died Boetius Mac Egan of Breffni, "a learned man in laws and music," who is described in the *Annals of Ulster* as "ollav in jurisprudence."

It scarcely comes within the scope of this work to touch on literary Irish personages, yet I cannot well resist the temptation of citing a little-known item of information, namely, the appointment of an Irishman as Lecturer in Oxford University. This eminent divine—Matthew O'Howen (Owens), son of the *Amcinneis* of Inishkeen on Lough Erne—lectured continuously at Oxford for fourteen years, and died on September 4th, 1382. His son, Matthew, was chaplain of Inishkeen, whose death occurred on October 11th, 1393, as is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster*.

composed. This he did in 1750; and it will be found in Walker and Hardiman. O'Connor's testimony, quoting Handel, may be found in his *Dissertations*, p. 58. From the concluding stanza the Irish motto: *Céad míle fáilte* has been taken.

**Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 322.

On February 8th, 1396, died Matthew O'Luinin, "Herenach of the Ards [near Enniskillen], namely, an expert, learned man, both in poetry and history and melody and literature and other arts"—(*Annals of Ulster*).

The advent of Sir John Stanley as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in December, 1399, is memorable for renewed hostility to Irish Bards and Minstrels, and as a consequence, his Viceroyalty was most unpopular. He left the country in May, 1401, and in the August following he was succeeded by Stephen Scrope, Deputy for the Duke of Clarence. This brings us to the fifteenth century, which demands a chapter all to itself.